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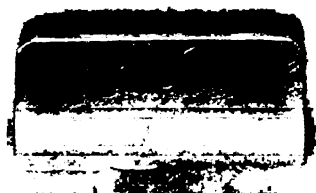
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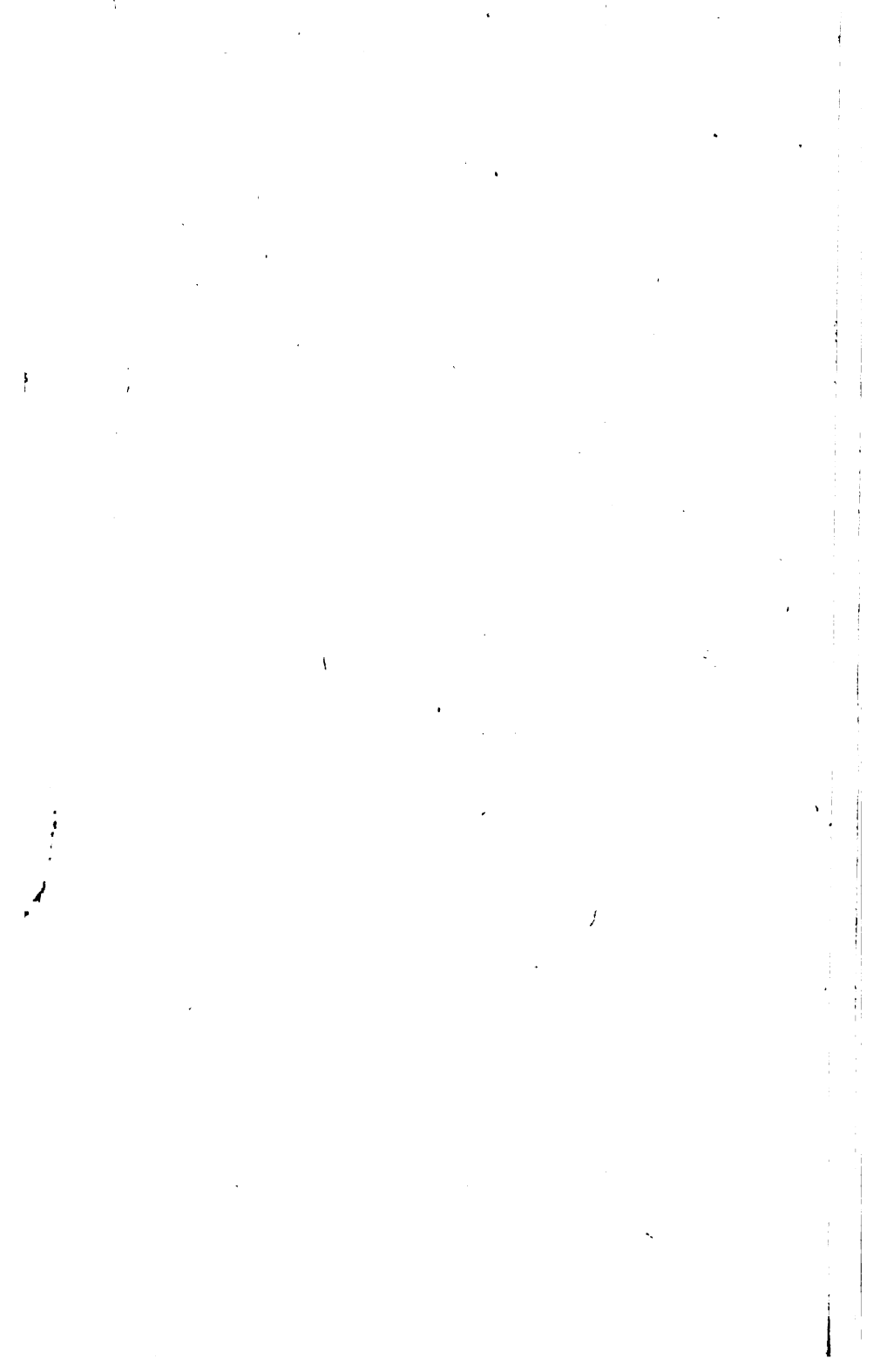
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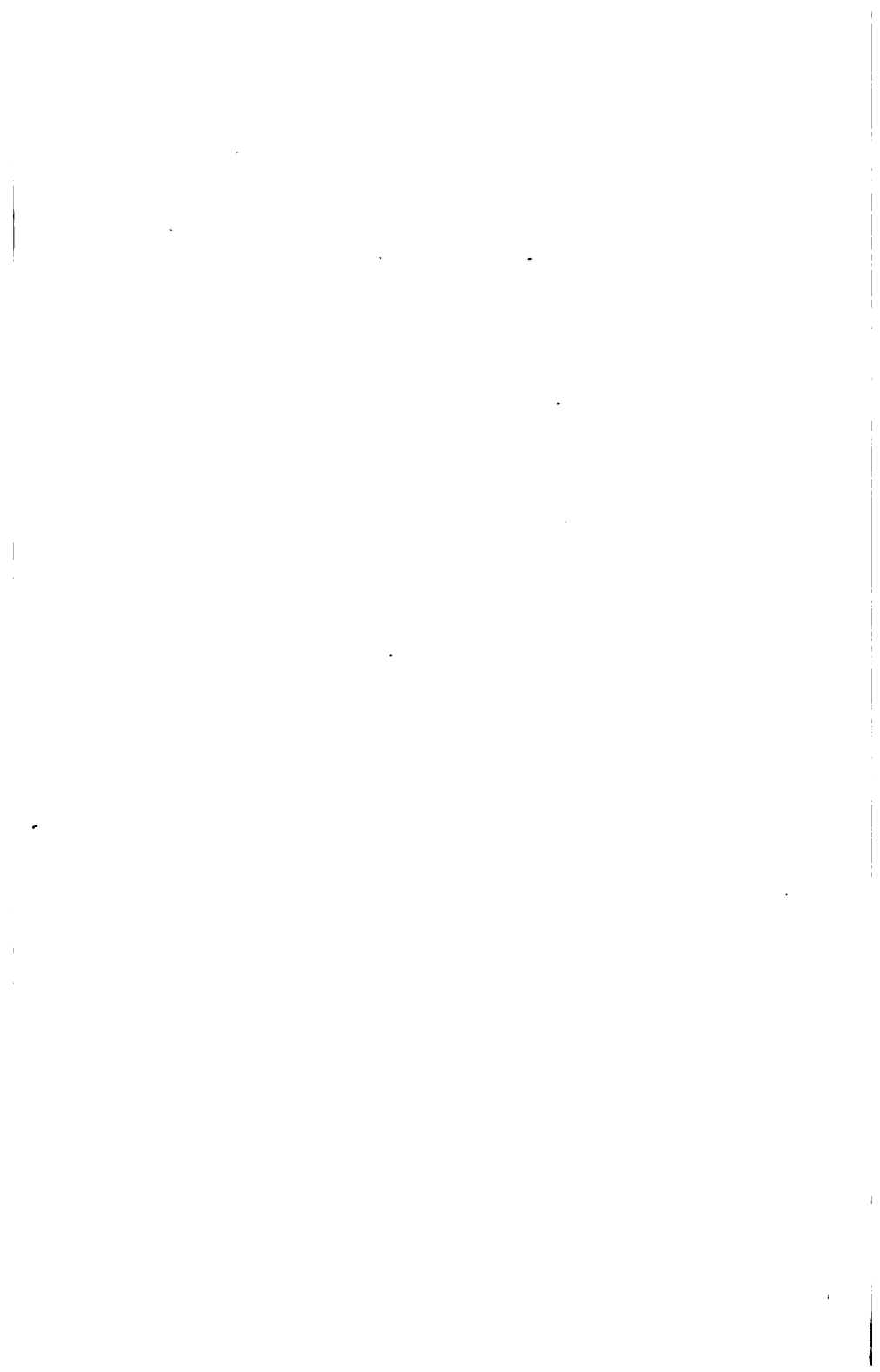
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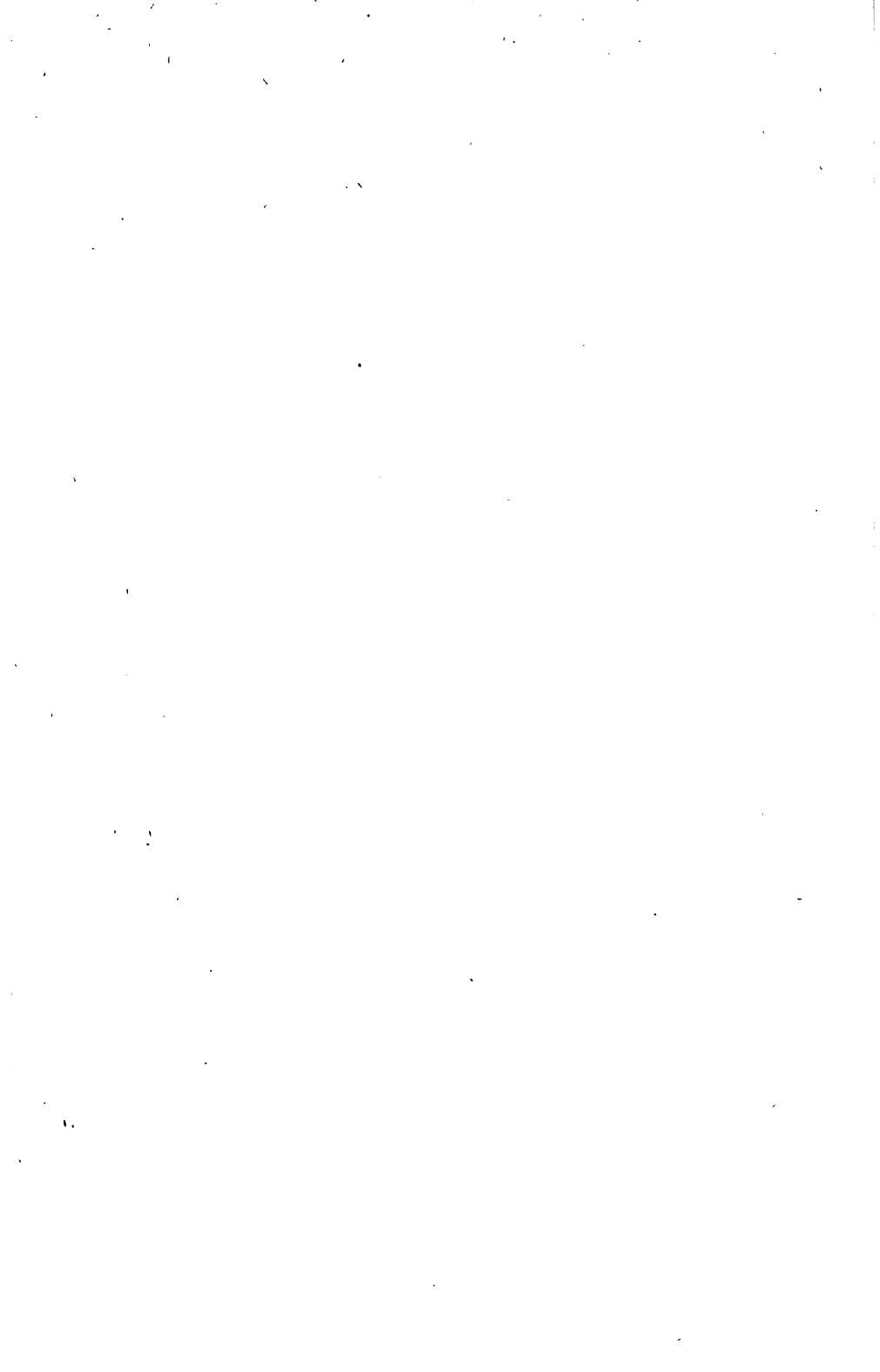
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**OLD ROADS OUT OF  
PHILADELPHIA**







**THE GULPH ROCK, ON THE OLD GULPH ROAD**  
Washington led his soldiers under this rock when on the march to Valley Forge

# OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

BY *o e*

JOHN T. FARIS

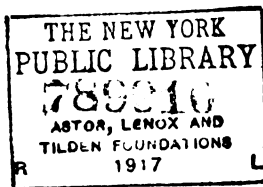
MEMBER CITY HISTORY SOCIETY OF PHILADELPHIA AND OF THE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA; AUTHOR OF "REAL STORIES FROM OUR HISTORY,"  
"WINNING THE OREGON COUNTRY," "THE ALASKAN PATHFINDER," ETC.

*WITH 117 ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP*



PHILADELPHIA AND LONDON  
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1917



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## FOREWORD

**H**OW many of those who speed along the roads out of Philadelphia in their motorcars, who ride in trolleys, or take refreshing walks, know of the roads on which they travel or of the things that they see by the way? This volume has been prepared for the purpose of adding to the enjoyment of outdoor life, entertainment, knowledge of fascinating bits of local history, and pleasing adventure.

For the vicinity of Philadelphia is rich in historical interest. Boston alone, among American cities, can compare with it in this respect, but Philadelphia has the advantage of Boston in that so many of the historic buildings and their surroundings are still practically in the state in which they were a century or more ago.

Some one has compared the old roads out of Philadelphia to the sticks of a lady's fan. If an opened fan is laid on the map of Philadelphia and its surrounding country westward, the boundary sticks may be made to conform to the Delaware. The city itself will be covered by the open portion of the fan, while the radiating sticks will correspond after a fashion to the ten great old roads, several of which date from the later years of the seventeenth century.

It is quite possible for the automobilist, in a single half day, starting from the first of these roads to the

▼

## FOREWORD

south, the Wilmington Turnpike—say at a point fifteen miles from the City Hall—to go across country on a line roughly parallel with the boundaries of the city, crossing in turn the Baltimore, the West Chester, the Lancaster, the Gulph, the Ridge, the Germantown, the Bethlehem, the York and the Bristol roads.

After such a trip, the roads might with great profit and pleasure be traversed one after another, to a distance of thirty, forty or fifty miles from the city, or even farther, though thirty or thirty-five miles will include the most of the historic portion of any of these roads, at least so far as the history is bound up with Philadelphia.

Most of the roads are well surfaced, and the automobile owner may take all of the trips outlined in the chapters of this volume. Moreover, car lines are so well placed that one can cover much of the territory indicated by trolley. Thus there is a trolley on the Wilmington road as far as Wilmington; the Baltimore road has a trolley from Angora to Media; the West Chester road has a car line its entire length; the Ridge road may be seen from the car window; the traveler along the Germantown road can go quite a distance by car; much of the Bethlehem Turnpike may be seen on the cars of the Liberty Bell route; there is a trolley to Willow Grove on the York Road, from Willow Grove to Doylestown on what, by some early writers, was spoken of as a branch of the York Road, and from Willow Grove to Hatboro on the main stem of the York Road, while the trolley line keeps on or close to the Bristol road all the way to Morrisville. Only the

## FOREWORD

Lancaster and the Gulph roads are entirely without trolley service, though much of the Lancaster Pike may be reached from stations on the Philadelphia and Western to Strafford, while a convenient point on the Gulph road may be reached over the main line of the same line.

The roads can be seen best by those who will go over them in a leisurely manner, stopping to look for all houses and churches and for other spots with associations that take one far back into the past, and going down the side roads where many of the places most worth seeing are found.

It has not been the purpose of the author to tell of all the historic points on any road. To do this would make the book unreadable. Then it would not be right to deprive the traveler of the fun of making discoveries in unexpected places. One who begins the search in earnest will find spots that are not mentioned in any book. He may stumble on a building of which even those best informed in the history of Philadelphia and its surroundings are ignorant. When such a place is found, the next thing is to learn its story. Concerning many of the old places no story can be told; but it is surprising how much can be learned when the inquirer persists, exhausting every avenue of discovery. And it will be found that there are few pleasures greater than that of those who roam the country about Philadelphia and piece together the story of the pioneers in connection with their houses and their favorite haunts.

The writer is glad to acknowledge his indebtedness

## FOREWORD

to Frank H. Shelton for the use of many of the photographs reproduced in the chapters on the Baltimore and the West Chester roads; to Frank H. Taylor, for the use of historical data; to E. R. Longstreth, for suggestions of great value; to Lincoln Cartledge and Fred P. Powers, for the use of photographs taken by them; to A. O. H. Grier, for Wilmington photographs; to Ernest Spofford, Assistant Librarian of the Library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania; to H. G. Blatchley, Rev. Irving R. Wagner and Dr. Collin Foulkrod, for companionship on a number of the roads; and to Ph. B. Wallace and Henry C. Howland, architectural and landscape photographers, who accompanied him on his trips to many of the points mentioned in the volume, and took most of the photographs reproduced.

The chapter on the Lancaster Turnpike was already printed when action was taken by the Pennsylvania Legislature that made free to all users the last toll sections of this pioneer turnpike.

J. T. F.

Philadelphia, 1917

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# OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

## I

### IN OLD PHILADELPHIA

**O**F all the many places I have seen in the world I remember not one better seated; so that it seems to me to have been appointed for a Town. . . . It is advanced within less than a Year to about *four score* Houses and Cottages, such as they are. . . .

So William Penn, Proprietor of Pennsylvania, spoke of his beloved Philadelphia, in a prospectus which he sent in 1683 to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders residing in London, after he had made this explanation:

Philadelphia, the Expectation of those who are concerned in this Province, is at last laid out to the great Content of those here, that are anyways Interested therein; the Scituation is a Neck of Land, and lieth between two Navigable Rivers, Delaware and Skulkill, whereby it hath two Fronts upon the Water, each a Mile, and two from River to River. Delaware is a glorious River, but the Skulkill being one hundred Miles Boatable Above the Falls . . . is like to be a great part of the Settlement of this Age.

The plan of the city called for a High Street (now Market Street) from river to river, one hundred feet in width, and a Broad Street in the middle of the City,

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

from side to side, of the like breadth. In the centre of the city was located "a Square of ten Acres" at each angle of which were to be placed "Houses for publick Affairs, as a Meeting-House, Assembly or State House, Market House, School-House." It was arranged also that "in each Quarter of the City" there should be a "Square of eight Acres, to be for the like Uses." In addition to the High Street there were to be eight streets from river to river, and twenty streets (besides the Broad street) across the city, each fifty feet wide.

For many years the streets on each river front were numbered in a similar manner, thus: Delaware Front, Delaware First, Delaware Second, and so on to Broad Street; and Schuylkill Front, Schuylkill First, Schuylkill Second, and so on, to Broad Street. The residents of the city must have breathed a sigh of relief when this awkward nomenclature was abandoned.

Lossing says that when William Penn, with the help of Thomas Holme, the surveyor, laid out the city at the close of 1682, he caused the boundaries of the streets to be marked on the trunks of the chestnut, walnut, locust, spruce, pine and other forest trees that covered the land. It was natural, then, that some of the streets should bear the names of those trees.

Penn's "Checker-board plan," as it came to be called, elicited much favorable comment from early travelers from abroad who have left accounts of their journeys. One of these travelers, who told of visiting a number of other cities in the infant colonies, spoke with satisfaction when he found a place that had adopted Penn's plan in laying out the streets. One

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traveler said, in despair, that it was too easy to find his way about in Philadelphia!

In 1755 Thomas Pownall told of some changes that time had made in the city. "Front Street," he said, "stretches farther along the banks of the Delaware than as designed by the original plan, as the other streets are more and more defalcated of their length, so that the shape of the town at present is that of a semi-oval."

The same writer called attention to a fact that shows what a shrewd real estate agent William Penn was:

All the plans of Philadelphia represent it as extending from the River Delaware to the Schuylkill. This was indeed the original plan laid down on paper, and held out to the first settlers, and it is said that Mr. Penn sold many of the lots on the banks of the Schuylkill almost as dear as those on the bank of the River Delaware. That the town should ever have such extent is almost impossible; it does not extend one-third of the way: those, therefore, who bought their lots as a speculation were much deceived.

At about the same time Peter Kalm, a Swedish traveler, said that the purchasers of the first lots sold had actually begun to build houses on both these rivers, although the place was at that time an entire wilderness covered with thick forests. "But the inhabitants could not be got in sufficient numbers to fill a place of such extent," he commented. "The plan therefore about the river Skulkill was laid aside till more favorable circumstances should occur, and the houses were only built along the Delaware. The houses which had already been built upon the Skulkill

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

were transplanted hitherto by degrees." At the date of his visit the town measured a little more than an English mile in length, and the breadth in some places was half a mile. The population was said to be about twenty thousand.

Some of the earliest settlers lived for a time in primitive cave-houses in the side of a hill or in a bank of earth. In the side of this a shallow pit was dug. The excavation in the bank was about seven feet deep at the rear, the earth walls sloping to the ground level at the front. The next step was to line the sides of the excavation with rough stones, or with logs set upright and close together; these walls reached to a height of perhaps seven feet on all sides. Thus the earth bank at the rear was as high as the walls. Sometimes the earth was banked high on the sides also. The roof was made either of logs, plastered with clay, or with bark or thatch on poles. It is a tradition in one old Philadelphia family that when the primitive cave-house of their ancestors was succeeded by a more ambitious dwelling, the cave-house was carefully preserved in the cellar.

Thomas Pownall wrote that it was the original idea that Delaware Front Street should have no houses immediately on the bank, but a parapet. However, "after the first settlers had bought these lots on Front Street, it was found more convenient for the merchants and traders to build their warehouses, and even dwelling-houses, on the beach below, which they wharfed out. This part of the soil was not sold," he added, for "several took long leases, and this became a street

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of the dwelling-houses &c of all the principal Merchants and rich men of business, and was called Water Street."

Another tribute to one of the greatest real estate dealers America has known was paid by Mr. Pownall, who said, "a prodigious advantage arose to Mr. Penn's estate upon the long leases falling in."

At the time of which Mr. Pownall wrote (1755) "the houses were all of brick; the fronts of them precisely such as those in Cheapside, London; a pent over the base story, and shop, and a little slip of a window to light a closet on the side of the chimnie."

A later traveler, William Priest (1794), said, for the benefit of readers in England:

The first object of an industrious emigrant, who means to settle in Philadelphia, is to purchase a lot of ground in one of the vacant streets. He erects a small building forty or fifty feet from the line laid out for him by the city Surveyor, and lives there till he can afford to build a house, when his former habitation serves him for a kitchen and a work-house. I have observed buildings in this state in the heart of the city; but they are more common in the outskirts.

Five years before the observant Mr. Priest told of the houses in the city Samuel Breck told of a man who lived in a venerable looking house standing where the "Bank of the United States now is. . . He has been cutting up his garden into building lots. It extended to Fifth Street, and in it the City Library in that street was built, and the fine row of brick houses on Chestnut Street lately converted into the most splendid shops in America, and which may stand comparison with any in London or Paris."

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"The increase of this city is still astonishing," the Hon. Jonathan Mason of Boston wrote in 1804, after passing through Philadelphia with his family, on the way to Savannah. Then he added:

I am persuaded, though the citizens deny it, that they do not trade so much and so well as New York, and that their commercial capital is lessening; yet having been in the habit of building for several years past, the Masons and Carpenters and tradesmen from their past earnings are able and obliged to employ their journeymen and themselves in fitting up houses for rent and sale. There is not a gentleman in the city that has built this year past, and yet whole squares have been covered in that time, five hundred houses the last year.

In 1755 it was noted as a fact worthy of attention that "on each side of the streets there is a trottoir paved with brick: the Streets are not yet paved, but formed with gravel, as were the great streets of London, two hundred years ago."

At this time, in spite of the fact that more than seventy years had elapsed since the settlement of the city, there were "remaining in some of the Streets, the stumps or roots of some of the original Pine trees."

In 1789 no pavement extended south of Chestnut Street beyond Fourth. When Washington went to the theater in Cedar Street, he had great difficulty in keeping out of the mud when he stepped from his coach.

Just before the close of the century came an improvement which was looked on with disapproval by many of the old residents who had been content to get their water from pumps, placed in different parts



**A TYPICAL PHILADELPHIA STREET OF THE EARLY PERIOD**  
**Elfrith Alley, now Cherry Street, between First and Second Streets**



**THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WASHINGTON SQUARE**



**BLACK HORSE INN, SECOND AND CALLOWHILL STREETS**  
From the rear

## IN OLD PHILADELPHIA

of the city. On some streets, according to Dr. Manasseh Cutler, who visited the city in 1787, each house had its own pump at the edge of the sidewalk, ten feet from the house front. "A company of adventurers," William Priest wrote in 1794, "are bringing water from above the falls of Schuylkill, in the manner of the New River in London: but mean to improve on Hugh Middleton's plan, by making their aqueduct also serve the purpose of inland navigation." A matron of the period told of the introduction of the water through hollow logs, laid beneath the roadway, and added that she did not know if she would like the new way. She had been accustomed to go for her bath to certain public places provided for the purpose, and the prophecy that soon people would be able to bathe in their own houses did not appeal to her.

More than thirty years after the first city water system was discussed, an old man, William Kite, told of his recollections of the city when he was a boy, about 1758. He said that Washington Square, which was then the Potter's Field, was an unsightly piece of ground, part of which was filled with many cart loads of brick bats, stones, and all kinds of rubbish, "which, by the bye, is one reason for the difficulty of raising trees in that part of the square."

The garrulous old man went on to say:

Just below Fourth Street lived Cutty Cramer, who kept cows, and used to send his daughter, Guly, with milk to his neighbors. On the hill adjoining Walnut Street, he had a small Peach Orchard, but how he kept the fruit from being taken by us boys I know not.

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

But perhaps his most significant reminiscence was of the Dock Creek, which was open to Third Street, and concerning the green Commons, which extended in some places from Eighth Street to the Centre Woods (City Hall Square); "how that famous forest was cut down by the British troops, and how there was but one brick house on Market Street above Fifth Street." Bush Hill, James Hamilton's place, was spoken of as a country seat, though it extended from Vine to Coates Street (Fairmount Avenue), and from Twelfth to Nineteenth Street.

All agreed that life in Philadelphia was far from dull. Kalm told of the two great fairs held every year, one in May, and the other in November, on the sixteenth day of the month. "But besides the fairs," he wrote, "there are every week two market days, viz. Wednesday and Saturday; on these days the Country people in Pennsylvania and New Jersey bring to town a quantity of victuals, and other productions of the country, and this is a great advantage to the town."

In 1824 a traveler wrote a full description of the market:

The market house, which is nothing more than a roof supported by pillars and quite open to each side, begins on the bank of the Delaware, and runs one mile, that is, eight squares in length! It must be understood, however, that the Market house stops at the edge of every square, (so as not to interfere with the cross streets), and begins on the next square, and so on, having an interval for every street, but on market days... a strong chain is drawn quite across the Street at each end of the Market house, and so no horse or carriage

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is permitted to pass, as these intervals, as well as the whole market, are then occupied by both buyers and sellers, to a degree beyond belief.

One square from the lower end of the market was another haunt of buyers and sellers, and of this many in the city were not so proud—the auction block at which slaves were sold. This stood at the corner of Second and Chestnut Streets, almost directly in front of Old Buttonwood, as the First Presbyterian Church, now located on Washington Square, was called. One of the slaves sold there was advertised thus by Benjamin Franklin, the printer:

To be sold: a likely negro wench, about thirty-five years of age; is an exceeding good cook, washwoman and ironer, and is very capable of doing all sorts of housework. Inquire of the printer.

Not only were slaves sold here, but immigrants who had promised to give a number of years of service in return for their passage to America. An early resident of Philadelphia received a letter from a friend in New Castle, Delaware, who told of the town's loss of their valued schoolmaster, but added cheerfully that the man could be replaced easily from a vessel which was expected soon; it would only be necessary to go to the dock and buy one!

A pleasanter subject was dwelt on in the letters of Alexander Mackraby to Sir Philip Francis of London. In 1768 Mackraby, who spent some months in Philadelphia, was so carried away by the women he met that he talked about them more than about anything else. "The circle and the beauty of ladies in New

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York bears no comparison with this city," was his verdict. "I am repeatedly reminded of this observation," he continued. "The ladies here resemble the city, pretty, regular, and refined. Their beaux must be imported, for at this moment they are only as one to five in number, and as ordinary as they are scarce. I can say nothing of the young men who are growing up. Their scarcity gives them advantages which they do not improve."

Once, after a dinner, he wrote:

Again reminded by the presence of many lovely women, of their superiority, in beauty, affability, and manners, to those of New York. A man would suppose that where so much worth was so visible, there would be more matrimony, but the reverse is true; and among many, one cause is the dress and extravagant ideas of the ladies themselves. The generality of the young men of our country are not able to support the rank and grade which the ladies assume, particularly in dress.

One English visitor had a word of criticism for the ladies; he said they would not walk with him; he could see them only at their own homes or at the semi-monthly assembly. Likewise, in 1794, William Priest said:

The fair Philadelphians are by no means so fond of walking as the English ladies, not that they have any great dislike to a trip in the country, but it is not fashionable even for a maid servant to make use of her legs on these occasions; the consequence is that there are 806 two and four wheeled coaches entered at the office and pay duty as pleasure carriages, most of which are for hire; and yet the inhabitants do not



**THE LUKE WISTAR MORRIS HOUSE, 225 SOUTH EIGHTH STREET**  
The residence of Mr. Edingham B. Morris



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exceed fifty thousand, of whom there are not three individuals but follow some profession, trade, or employment.

Of one of the carriage owners Mr. Priest said:

Peter Brown, a blacksmith, having made his fortune, set up his coach; but so far from being ashamed of the means by which he acquired his riches, he caused a large anvil to be painted on each pannel of his carriage, with two naked arms in the act of striking. The motto, "By this I got you."

It was stated in the City Directory of 1798 that Peter Brown was located at 144 North Front Street.

Eight hundred and six coaches seemed the height of luxury to the old man of whom George Phillips of Dublin wrote in 1824:

He remembered when there was but three carriages in the whole town, and now the streets were full of them, and he likewise said, that at so low a state was the commerce then, that two or three vessels at most arrived yearly with the manufactures of Great Britain, while at present the trade is so much increased, that some thousands of ships go out of the port yearly to different quarters of the world.

It was a favorite occupation of visitors to Philadelphia to dwell on the wonderful growth and prosperity of the city. Kalm, after reciting many facts that to him seemed astounding, said:

It will be easy to conceive how this city should rise so suddenly from nothing, into such grandeur and proportion, without suffering any powerful monarch's contributing to it...and yet its fine appearance, good regulation, agreeable situation, natural advantages, trade, riches and power, are by no means infe-

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rior to those of any, even of the most ancient towns of Europe. It has not been necessary to force people to come and settle here; on the contrary, foreigners of different languages, have left their country, houses, property and relations, and ventured over wide and stormy seas in order to come hither. Other countries which have been peopled for a long space of time, complain of the small number of their inhabitants. But Pennsylvania, which was not better than a desert in the year 1681, and hardly contained four hundred people, now vies with several kingdoms of Europe in number of inhabitants.

The rapid growth of Philadelphia and its surroundings encouraged John Melish, in his *Travellers' Directory* of 1824, to prophesy that in 1830 the population of the Union would be 12,875,000. This calculation was made in reply to a minister from Spain to the United States who had said that the population of the country "may now be considered as stationary." "Time will show how much he has been mistaken," Melish said. "Suppose the whole territory of the United States only as thickly settled as Pennsylvania, it would contain upwards of thirty-eight millions."

Then he made a final calculation: "Supposing the population increases in the same ratio as it has done for one hundred years, the result would be nearly as follows." His table of figures ended with 1916, when, he calculated, there would be 199,756,733 people in the country.

## II

### THE KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

And call they this Improvement?—to have changed  
My native Schuylkill's once romantic shore,  
Where Nature's face is banished and estranged,  
And Heaven reflected in thy wave no more;  
Whose banks, that sweeten'd May-day's breath before,  
Lie sere and leafless now in Summer's beam,  
With sooty exhalations cover'd o'er;  
And for the daisied green-sward, down the stream  
Unightly brick-lanes smoke, and clanking engines gleam.

**T**HOMAS HOOD wrote these lines of the Clyde, in his native Scotland, but the change of but the River's name shows how well they may be used of the Schuylkill, especially the stretch of the river for a mile above and below Gray's Ferry Bridge. For in early days the traveler along the King's Highway, soon after crossing the river at what is now Market Street, began to pass within view of a succession of bowers of beauty which must have been a delight to those who were accustomed to more prosaic surroundings.

The first of these gardens was on the estate of William Hamilton, son of Andrew Hamilton, once Attorney General of the Province of Pennsylvania, and nephew of James Hamilton, lieutenant governor of the Province. This estate contained more than three hundred acres, and extended north beyond the Market Street of to-day. The first family mansion, The Woodlands, was built by Andrew Hamilton, and its successor, the

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

house which is still standing, was built by William Hamilton about the time of the Revolution.

Early in the last century The Woodlands was thus described:

The building embraces three different orders of architecture, but the Doric prevails. The north terrace is ornamented in the front by six pilasters, and on each side is a pavilion; the south front has a magnificent portico, twenty-four feet in height, supported by six stately Tuscan columns.

Before long the mansion had to share its glory with the grounds. At first there was nothing particularly inviting about these, but when Mr. Hamilton went to England, soon after the close of the Revolution, the sight of the parks on the large estates led him to wonder if he could not have such a garden on the banks of the Schuylkill. At any rate, he sent word to his Secretary at The Woodlands:

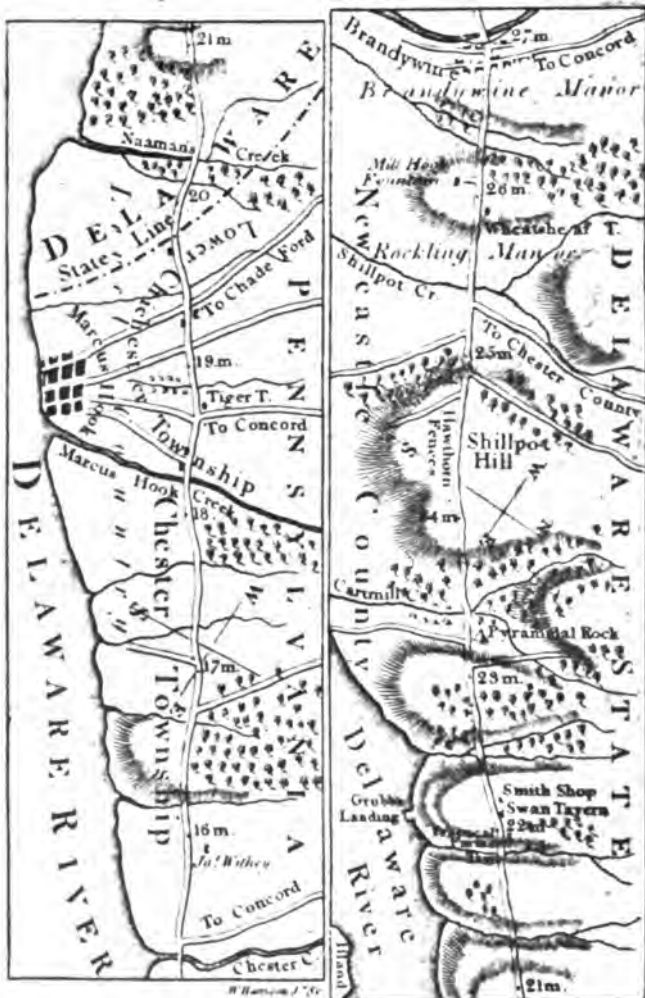
I shall, if God permits me a safe return to my own country, endeavor to make it smile in the same useful and beautiful manner.

But he could not wait until his return to America to begin his garden. From England he sent seeds and rare plants to his secretary with explicit directions as to their disposition. When he was himself on the estate he gave personal attention to the shrubbery, the trees, and the flowers. Many of these were brought from distant lands. Some of the captains of vessels which sailed down the Delaware carried with them commissions to bring back rare specimens for the garden.



## Road from Philadelphia to (WASHINGTON)

SECTIONS OF ROAD MAP FROM GRAY'S FERRY TO WILMINGTON  
From "The Traveller's Directory," S. S. Moore and T. W. Jones, 1802  
(Continued on reverse side)



Road from Philadelphia to  
 (WASHINGTON)

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

During Mr. Hamilton's absence on business trips, many of the letters to his secretary were devoted to minute instructions about his pet plants—how they were to be watered, where they were to be placed, what things were needed to complete the beauty of the grounds. Once he said, "The Rose Bush Box should be removed into ye shade behind the Hot House, there to remain during the summer." Again he wrote: "If George for one day neglects the necessary attendance on the Hot-bed, everything in it will be lost."

At length he was the proud possessor of what was spoken of as the best specimen of landscape gardening in the country. Visitors to the city went out to the estate in chariots, on horseback, or on foot. One of his visitors, a botanist, Manasseh Cutler, gave in 1803 his impression of the garden, for which, as Mr. Hamilton told him, "there was not a rare plant in Europe, Asia, Africa, from China and the islands in the South Seas, of which he had any account, which he had not procured." After walking over the lawns and along the paths his enthusiasm and amazement were unbounded.

A few months before the visit of Mr. Cutler, Mr. Hamilton wrote a curious letter which showed that he gave the same careful attention to the mansion as to his garden. Modern sufferers from the carelessness of builders will sympathize with his complaints:

Early in the winter I discovered accidentally that the plynths (or supports) of the portico columns were rotten as punk & that the whole of them as well as the roof was in jeopardy. The securing of them by underpinning with stone was attended with an im-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

ments of trouble & no small degree of expense. This you will readily believe when you are told that the columns & roof were obliged to be raised & supported during the operation by screws of an immense force. This was hardly ended when an accident happened equally unlooked for & was nearly attended with most serious consequences. The ceiling of my dining parlour (in consequence of the rascality of . . . . in laying the plaister to the thickness of from 4 to 5 inches) came down at once (without the smallest previous notice) with such force as to crush all in the way and shock the House like an aspen leaf & with such a noise that the family at Weeds came out of the ferry House to know what cannon had fired so near them.

Most of the rare plants have disappeared from the grounds of The Woodlands, which have been used since 1839 as a cemetery, but the visitor will see that the stone supports which were placed under the columns of the portico are still doing their work.

The route to The Woodlands was over what was once known as the Queen's Road, was authorized, in 1696, "to goe so far in the road that leads to Darby as may be." In 1781 this road became known as the Great Southern Post Road; it passed along what is now Woodland Avenue, to Forty-ninth Street. There it joined the King's Highway, which was opened on October 29, 1696. The latter road led from Chambers Ferry (later known as Gray's Ferry) along the present Gray's Ferry Road to Darby, Chester, Wilmington and "the lower counties."

In the Traveller's Directory for 1822, by John Melish, this table of distances was given for those who used the road from Market Street:

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

Cross Schuylkill.....	1 mile
Cobb's Creek.....	.5 miles
Darby.....	1 mile
Crum Creek.....	.6 miles
Ridley Creek.....	1 mile
Chester.....	1 mile
Marcus Hook.....	.3 miles
Naaman's Creek.....	.2 miles
Brandywine Creek.....	.8 miles
Wilmington.....	1 mile

The traveler who sought the famous gardens next beyond The Woodlands could use either the Great Southern Post Road to the north of the Schuylkill, or the King's Great Road to the south of the river, which led from Cedar Street, now South Street, over what is still called Gray's Ferry Road.

As early as 1740 the keeper of the ferry was George Gray, and his name has ever since been connected with the place. So many travelers used the ferry that, in 1790, a garden was opened for their accommodation on the western shore of the river. This garden was described by an enthusiastic visitor as "romantic and delightful beyond the power of description." Attention was called to oranges, lemons, pineapples and other tropical plants, and to the fact that on the grounds was "every kind of flower one could think that nature had ever produced, and with the utmost display of fancy as well as variety." Grottoes, cascades, chain bridges and other attractions led him to think that he must be "on enchanted ground."

To this garden came pleasure-seekers from Philadelphia in large numbers, for the entertainment pro-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

vided was pleasing. In winter the spot became the Mecca of sleighing parties. It is recorded that George Washington more than once refreshed himself at the inn in Gray's Garden.

The boat at Gray's Ferry was later succeeded by a primitive floating bridge, whose construction was described thus by Thomas Twining, an Englishman who visited the United States in 1796:

We soon reached the Schuylkill . . . crossed it upon a floating bridge, constructed of logs of wood placed by the side of each other upon the surface of the water, and planks nailed across them. Although the bridge floated when not charged, or charged but lightly, the weight of our waggons depressed it several inches below the surface, the horses splashing through the water, so that a foot passenger passing at the same time would have been exposed to serious inconvenience. The roughness and imperfection of this construction on the principal line of road in America, and not a mile from the seat of government, afforded the most striking instance I had yet seen of the little progress the country had made hitherto in the improvements of civilization.

But the traveler was too polite to give this as his last word. For fear he had been too critical he added:

I believe there is no nation that would have done more in so short a time, and most nations would have done infinitely less. . . . The bridge of planks and logs had probably succeeded a more insecure boat, and would certainly in a few years be replaced by arches of brick or stone.

The ferry and the bridge which succeeded it have witnessed stirring scenes. For instance, there was the

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

October day in 1781 when an express rider came up from the south, bearing the news which was first announced to the startled city by a German watchman: "Basht dree o'clock and Gornwallis isht daken."

More than two years later victorious General Washington crossed the river at the ferry on his way to his Mount Vernon estate, where he hoped to spend the rest of his days in peace.

One spring day in 1789, the bridge was decorated with triumphal arches, flowers and evergreen shrubbery, this time also in honor of General Washington, who crossed it on his way to New York, to assume his office as President.

On December 18, 1799, the southern mail coach crossed the bridge and, "passing through the forests which bordered the Schuylkill, took the country road we call Spruce Street." One of the passengers startled all within reach of his voice as he made the sorrowful announcement, "George Washington is dead!"

Nearly fifteen years later, when word was received of the burning of the city of Washington by the British soldiers, the bridge was the scene of great activity, for it echoed to the tread of hundreds of workmen who were hurrying to the location selected for the redoubts over the western end of the bridge. An early historian picturesquely tells what follows:

Parties composed of 400 victualers, 300 hatters and brickmakers, the crew of the privateer Washington, 300 cordwainers, 500 friendly aliens, 510 Free Masons, 2200 "sons of Erin, citizens of the United States," 650 colored men, 540 men from the German societies,

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

silversmiths, artists, lawyers, doctors, took up the pick and spade. In all 15,500 persons worked on the forts for one day each. . . . Every morning, between five and six o'clock, from September 3 to October 1, a crowd of these volunteers with their food in knapsacks and handkerchiefs, left the city and thronged out to the scene of their labors. As a rule, each party had its fife and drum. A Scotchman, dressed as a Highlander, played on the bagpipe, as he led some thirty other Scots, each with a spade, to the redoubts.

The row of houses in the triangle at Gray's Ferry Road and Forty-eighth Street marks the site of these redoubts. These houses are known as Fort Terrace.

The third garden which made the King's Highway famous was found, and may still be found, by the traveler who turned toward the river at what is now Fifty-third Street, and sought the estate of John Bartram, which made its owner famous, both because of his "garden of delight," and because of the house that he built with his own hands.

The ancient stone house stands a few rods from the banks of the Schuylkill. Beneath one of the windows is a stone on which is carved rudely this inscription:

It is God Alone, Almyty Lord,  
The Holy One By me Ador'd.  
John Bartram 1770.

This confession of faith was added to the house many years after the earnest Quaker owner built it. For another stone, set in the south wall, has this record:

John: Ann: Bartram: 1731.

A critic of Philadelphia's colonial architecture has said that the "details are generally hard and crude and

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

often inappropriate"; and he cites this house of John Bartram's as an example. But, as the *Architectural Record* points out, "Bartram's house ought not to be regarded as in any way representative of Philadelphia domestic architecture, and, least of all, as representative of Georgian building. It is in a class all by itself and presents nothing but John Bartram's home-made efforts in both plans and execution of detail."

The quaint house was in the midst of a tract of land which the owner transformed from a wilderness into a garden, bearing all manner of trees and fruits and plants, gathered from up and down the Atlantic Coast and as far into the interior as the Allegheny Mountains.

The plain Quaker gardener, who was born March 23, 1709, had little opportunity to attend school, but he made up for the lack by teaching himself. He learned Latin and Greek in the intervals of his farm work. He was a diligent farmer, and his crops were abundant, but he was not content to plant the seed and reap the grain; he wanted to know more of the wonders of God's world. His son William wrote of him:

While engaged in plowing his fields and mowing his meadows, his inquisitive eye and mind were frequently exercised in the contemplation of vegetables; the beauty and harmony displayed in their mechanism, the admirable system of order which the great Author of the universe has established throughout their various tribes, and the equally wonderful powers of their generations, the progress of their growth, and the various stages of their maturity and perfection.

As he studied, there came to him the desire to plant his garden; so he bought a piece of ground at a tax sale,

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

built his house, hewed out of stone a great watering trough, which is still shown to visitors, contrived a wonderful cider mill in a ledge of outcropping rock on the bank of the river, and proceeded to lay out a five-acre garden, the first botanical garden in America.

Eager to include in his garden specimens from all parts of the country, he occupied a portion of each year in laborious journeys. William Bartram said of these trips:

He traveled several thousand miles in Carolina and Florida. At the advanced age of near seventy years, embarking on board of a vessel at Philadelphia, he set sail for Charleston, in South Carolina. From thence he proceeded, by land, through part of Carolina and Georgia, to St. Augustine in Florida.

A delightful glimpse of life at the Bartram home is given in a letter from a visitor to America, written in 1769, and published in London in 1782 in "Letters from an American Farmer."

I was received at the door by a woman dressed extremely neat and simple, who asked me who I wanted. I answered, "I should be glad to see Mr. Bartram." "If thee will step in and take a chair I will send for him." "No," I said, "I had rather have the pleasure of walking through his farm." After a little time I perceived the Schuylkill, winding through delightful meadows, and soon cast my eyes on a new-made bank, which seemed greatly to confine its stream. I at last reached the place where two men were at work. An elderly looking man, with wide trousers and large leather apron, on looking at me, said: "My name is Bartram. Dost thee want me?" "I should be glad to spend a few

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

hours in your garden," I said. "Our jaunt into the garden must be postponed for the present, as the bell is ringing for dinner." We entered into a large hall, where there was a long table full of victuals; at the lowest part sat his negroes; his hired men were next; then the family and myself, and at the head, the venerable father and his wife presided. Each reclined his head and said his prayers. . . .

In his work in the garden Mr. Bartram was assisted by a company of negroes to whom he had given liberty. Each of these received eighteen pounds a year wages, with board and clothes. The oldest of this number was his master's business man, going every few days to Philadelphia, and arranging the shipments of plants and trees and insects which were sent to England by almost every vessel leaving the port of Philadelphia. The grave of this faithful servant is still pointed out to visitors.

The monuments of John Bartram are an old volume of correspondence with his English friends, and the garden—neglected, cut in two by a railroad from Philadelphia to Washington, but still the old estate wrested from the river by the hands of the lover of nature nearly two hundred years ago.

Many of the trees have perished, and have left no sign. One relic of the past still stands, though it may not last many years longer—the great trunk of a cypress planted about 1735. On one of his trips into Delaware the botanist procured the cypress slip, which he carried home in his saddlebags. It grew to be one hundred and fifty feet high and twenty-seven feet in circumference. In 1899 it still bore a few live twigs.

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

But now the trunk stands in the midst of the garden, gaunt, huge, crumbling into dust.

The Lady Petrie pear tree is still bearing fruit, after more than one hundred and fifty years. In 1763 Bartram wrote to Peter Collinson:

The Pear raised from her (Lady Petrie's) seed hath borne a number of the finest relished fruit. I think a better is not in the world.

Box trees planted by the botanist are yet green. There is a jujube tree, planted in 1735, which waves above the old house. Elsewhere are a Ginkgo tree from Japan, a holly, a tulip tree, a silver-bell tree, a cucumber tree—of the species brought from Lake Ontario in 1763—and a horse-chestnut, grown from seed received from England in 1746. These are among the old trees that are still green. Over the arbor grows a trumpet vine which was sent from North Carolina in 1749.

Bartram's Garden was looked upon as one of the wonders of colonial days. Here Washington and Franklin and Jefferson used to come for rest and refreshment, and here tens of thousands of others had the intimate communion with nature that the proprietor of the garden made possible for them by his years of loving toil.

When Bartram was dying he feared that his pride would be laid waste by the British army, which was advancing from the Brandywine. He died, September 22, 1777, before the soldiers came to Philadelphia. But when they came, it was not "to lay waste his darling garden, the nursling of almost half a century," but to pass it by unharmed.

The botanist's son John succeeded him as proprie-



**JOHN BARTRAM'S HOUSE**



**THE BLUE BELL TAVERN**



**SAID TO BE THE OLDEST HOUSE IN DARBY**



**THE WHITE HORSE TAVERN, NORWOOD**

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

tor. With him lived his brother William, whose fame as a nature lover was second only to that of his father. After his death in 1823 the garden passed to other hands. To-day it is a park belonging to the city of Philadelphia. It should have a constant stream of visitors. Yet comparatively few go there. Many old residents have not thought it worth while to visit it; many more do not know of its existence. But some day it will be thought of as one of the spots that every one must visit.

It was but a short distance from John Bartram's house to the quaint church of Saint James of Kingessing, which now occupies, with its burying ground and rectory, a square between Sixty-eighth and Sixty-ninth Streets on Woodland Avenue. In 1761 it was decided by the Lutherans who worshipped at Gloria Dei in Wicaco to build a church in Kingessing, a Swedish hamlet, for the accommodation of members who ought not to be asked to continue to take the long trip to the quiet church near the Delaware. The new outstation was built on three "spannland" of ground, which were to belong "for time eternal" to the Swedish Evangelic Lutheran church in Wicaco.

The original building is the main portion of the church as it stands to-day, without the wings and the tower. The original rectory is now used as a residence for some of the staff of the Catholic institution farther down the street, which was occupied as a hospital during the Civil War.

One of the most enthusiastic givers and workers for the new church was James Coultas of Whitby Hall,

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

who had opened his home for preaching services during many months. He was a leader of the "members of the congregation who came to work, as often as they were called upon, often more than one hundred persons at a time," according to the curious account written by Dr. Wrangel, who was rector then and for many years afterward.

In the old burying ground there is a stone which bears this odd inscription:

Watch and pray, do not delay,  
For time doth quickly pass;  
For you may see, who pass by me,  
Man's days are like the grass.

Another stone gives this message:

Farewell, fond world, I have done with thee  
And I am careless what thou sayeth of me;  
Thy love I court not, nor thy frowns I fear;  
In hope, through charity, my head will easy lie here.

The church is prosperous as ever, but the property, which was designed for Lutheran uses "for time eternal," has for more than seventy years belonged to the Protestant Episcopal Church. This change followed the agreement of the King of Sweden, dated June 25, 1789, to the authority given to the church by the Pennsylvania Assembly to employ ministers of either the Lutheran or the Protestant Episcopal Church, and Assembly's act of December 31, 1842, authorizing the erection of the parish of St. James.

Whitby Hall, the home of James Coultas, is a short distance from St. James. It was reached by a lane which led from the King's Road to the road to West

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

Chester. At first this was called Coultas's Lane. Later it was known as Gray's Lane. The location to-day is Fifty-eighth Street and Florence Avenue. The site was on the brow of a hill above the Ameasaka, a small tributary of the Kasakung, now Cobb's Creek.

The original house was built in 1741, though a wing was added in 1754. Later reconstruction has been done so well that the original charm of the building has been retained. Critics have said that the house is as perfect a specimen of colonial architecture as exists anywhere in the neighborhood of Philadelphia.

The builder of Whitby Hall was one of the foremost citizens of Philadelphia. From 1755 to 1758 he was High Sheriff of the city, and he was always a leader in planning public improvements. He was one of the commissioners to "survey" the Schuylkill, and he was an advocate of road improvement. In the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of December 13, 1764, appeared this advertisement signed by him:

Whereas Good roads are of the Greatest Use and Benefit to the Inhabitants, both as to Profit and Pleasure, and altho' the Legislature of the Province hath taken much Pains to make Laws for the Amendment of the Highways, yet do not seem to answer for the end thereby intended,

I do therefore humbly propose to undertake the Amendment of the Road from the first Hill to the Westward of the Lower Ferry on Schuylkill to the Borough of Chester, Deemed the Distance of about eleven Mile, making Stone Bridges over all the Runs and Hollows in the said road, if Money to defray the Expense of the same can be raised by Subscription from the Inhabitants, Travellers, County Commissioners, and the Over-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

seers of the Highways. I have given two Thousand pounds security to the Treasurers of the Counties of Philadelphia and Chester, and their Successors, that the Money so raised shall be expended for the aforesaid Use, and no other whatever.

Whitby Hall was one of the houses visited by Washington, who was a frequent traveler on the road. Another building which often sheltered him is at Sixty-eighth Street and Woodland Avenue, the old Blue Bell Tavern. Many stories are told of the hours he spent there. One of these, which is perhaps no more unreliable than any of the rest, is that one night three young girls looked in at the door of the room where the tall Virginian stood before the open fireplace. "He looks as if he would like a kiss," one of them said. "Which one of you said that?" the general asked, promptly. There was no reply, so Washington kissed all three!

Opposite the Blue Bell, on the banks of Cobb's Creek, there was for many years one of the numerous water-power mills which were to be found every few miles. This mill, it is said, was built by the Swedish Governor Printz.

According to the Traveller's Directory of 1802 the region at this point, along Cobb's Creek, between the Post road and the Delaware, was a favorite place for fattening cattle for the Philadelphia market, and it was a common occurrence to pass droves coming from the South with this purpose in view.

When the Traveller's Directory was issued, note was made of the fact that a little beyond Cobb's Creek stood the important town, Darby, which contained

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

"about fifty or sixty houses." Two of these houses are in the first square of Lansdowne Avenue, after leaving the trolley terminus. Both of these buildings are fine specimens of the Germantown-hood house. One of them is called the John Bartram house, and there is a tradition that the Colonial farmer-botanist lived here before making his "garden of delight" on the Schuylkill.

An early traveler, who told of approaching Darby from the south, in 1754, gave his impressions thus:

Darby looks very pretty, seen from off any of the hills round about it, for it stands in a bottom, surrounded with hills. The houses, built in one street, all stand in the bottom, and the sides of the hills are covered with houses and farms.

A later traveler, George Phillips, who passed this way in 1824, did not have so favorable an idea of the country, for he said that it had a barren appearance, "from the custom the inhabitants have of cutting down all the trees near the house; this they do, not for the value of the timber, but also for the sake of clearing the ground for the plough. The want of hedges," he continued, "also adds to the nakedness of the prospect, for the fields are divided only by a rude paling, which, to those acquainted with the neat hedge-rows of Ireland, had a very bleak and unsettled appearance."

From the hills about Darby is visible the region near the mouth of Darby Creek which is said to have been the site of Fort Beversede, built by the Dutch in 1633, to protect their trade with the Indians. Not far away was the island called Tenako, Mattinicum, Tena-konk, or Tinicum, where, in 1643, Governor Prints

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

built a fort of hemlock logs, which he called New Gothenberg, and his mansion, Printz Hall. In 1656, when the island fell into the hands of the Dutch, they changed the name to Kattenberg.

Beyond Darby every mile of the road has its attraction. An oddity at Glenolden, on the right, should be noted—an octagonal house which is plainly not a survival of the old days, in spite of its curious form. At Norwood, also on the right, is the old White Horse Inn, a relic of the days before the Revolution. This was another of Washington's favorite stopping places. Until recently the hostelry was open for business.

A now dilapidated house at Essington, on the Delaware, was the birthplace of John Morton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The house is said to date from 1698, and the date of Morton's birth was twenty-six years later. His ancestors were among the first Swedish emigrants who settled on the Delaware, and the first settlement was made only a short distance from the spot where the house stands. The Swedish records show that Marten was the name of the first American ancestor of the signer.

As a boy, John Morton did not have many advantages. For three months he was able to go to school, but after that he received his training from his step-father, who taught him the principles of surveying, considered almost a necessary accomplishment in the days of the settlement of a new country. He was better known, however, as "the plough boy of Ridley."

He was forty years old when his public service began, and his neighbors did not give him much rest after this



**THE BIRTHPLACE OF JOHN MORTON, ESSINGTON, SAID TO DATE FROM 1698**



**THE WASHINGTON HOTEL, CHESTER**

## OLD ROADS OUT

built a fort of hemlock logs, Kattenberg, and his mansion, the island fell into the hands of the name to Kattenberg.

Beyond Darby every thing is a new creation. An oddity at Glenview is noted—an octagonal house, a revival of the old days, in Norwood, also on the right; a relic of the days before another of Washington's favorites, recently the hostelry was opened.

A now dilapidated house, where, was the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence to date from 1698, and the first Swedish emigrants visited and the first settlement was from the spot where the records show that Martin's American ancestor of the

As a boy, John Martineau was a tages. For three months after that he received who taught him the almost a necessary settlement of a new however, as "the place

He was forty years and his neighbors



## HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

He was Justice of the Peace, then successor of the Pennsylvania General Assembly in the famous Stamp Act Congress which met in New York City in 1765. That he was ready to the capacity is evident from the fact that he was Sheriff of Chester County, while later he held the judges of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 1774, 1775 and 1776 he was a member of

He had the opportunity for the great service. He was one of five delegates from Pennsylvania when the vote was to be taken on the Declaration of Independence. Great pressure was brought to the delegates by those who wished them to vote for the other. There was much difference of opinion among the Pennsylvania delegates, and there was great anxiety on the part of the advocates of a cautious policy. What if the great colony of Pennsylvania should not stand with those who demanded inalienable rights? At the decisive moment two delegates, both of whom were known to be in favor of the Declaration, were absent. Of the five remaining, two, Benjamin Franklin and James Wilson, were in favor of the decisive action, while Charles Carroll and Thomas Miller were in opposition. Carroll had the casting vote, and he voted in the affirmative. It is said that the great strain under which he labored on this momentous day hastened his death, less than a year later. His biographer says that during his last days many old friends turned from him because of his position. But he was not disturbed. "Tell them,"



**THE TOWN HALL, CHESTER, 1728**

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

time. First he was Justice of the Peace, then successively member of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and a member of the famous Stamp Act Congress which met in New York City in 1765. That he was ready to serve in any capacity is evident from the fact that he was next sheriff of Chester County, while later he became one of the judges of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. In 1774, 1775 and 1776 he was a member of Congress.

Here he had the opportunity for the great service of his life. He was one of five delegates from Pennsylvania when the vote was to be taken on the Declaration of Independence. Great pressure was brought to bear on the delegates by those who wished them to vote one way or the other. There was much difference of opinion among the Pennsylvania delegates, and there was great anxiety on the part of the advocates of a courageous policy. What if the great colony of Pennsylvania should not stand with those who demanded their inalienable rights? At the decisive moment two of the seven delegates, both of whom were known to be against the Declaration, were absent. Of the five remaining, two, Benjamin Franklin and James Wilson, were in favor of the decisive action, while Charles Humphrey and Thomas Miller were in opposition. Morton had the casting vote, and he voted in the affirmative. It is said that the great strain under which he labored on this momentous day hastened his death, less than a year later. His biographer says that during his last days many old friends turned from him because of his action. But he was not disturbed. "Tell them,"

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

he said when on his deathbed, "that they will live to see the time when they shall acknowledge it to be the most glorious service that I ever rendered to my country."

He was buried in the cemetery of St. Paul's Church, Chester, now in the heart of the city, on Third Street, above Market.

From Essington the traveler should return to the turnpike as he came, and go on to Ridley Park. Just beyond Swarthmore Avenue, on the right, is a stately stone house, now used as a residence, which was one of the colonial taverns. A quaint feature of the place is a high old wooden pump, under a sheltering roof.

Opposite the entrance to Stewart's Lane, Ridley Park, on the right, is an old house occupied by H. M. Worrall, whose father, who was born in 1795, went to school in a stone building still standing a few hundred yards beyond the house, on the same side of the road, near Little Crum Creek. This was one of the subscription schools of the early days before the public school system had been thought of.

Many historic houses in this section have long since disappeared, to the sorrow of the traveler, but there is one institution which existed at Ridley Park from early days, at whose disappearance there was no regret—the old toll gate, one of six between Chester and Darby. Toll was charged on the road for more than two hundred years, or from the time when the highway was opened in response to the petition of one hundred residents.

An English traveler in early days spoke with joy of

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

his first sight of a turnpike gate on this highway, because it made him think of home. He was glad to see that America had adopted "a custom of the Mother Country which Adam Smith cites as one of the most equitable examples of taxation, the traveller paying for an evident convenience and in proportion as he enjoys it."

Near Crum Creek in Leiperville is a house, now occupied as a residence, which was built of the white stone similar to that used in the Chester City Hall. On the front of the house is a stone bearing the message, "1770 5 S L" (5 miles to State Line, the legend is supposed to mean). Here Washington is said to have spent the night after the disastrous defeat at Brandywine. It was then the home of John McIlvaine.

A colonial stone house a short distance beyond the point where the trolley line leaves the pike is the home of Miss Eliza Leiper, great-granddaughter of Thomas Leiper, for whom the borough is named. The house, old at the time of the Revolution, was occupied by a family whose son was in the Continental army. Once, when at home on furlough, he hesitated to show himself, fearing betrayal by a Tory family who lived across the road, though at some distance. One day he thought it was safe to come out early to the pump for his morning wash. A sharp-eyed Tory saw him and sent word to the British commander, who sent a boat up Ridley Creek, captured the soldier and sent him to the prison ship in New York Harbor.

The many navigable creeks along this road made travel difficult in the early days. Some years before

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

the Revolution the road did not run through the present Leiperville, but some distance to the north, where it was easier to ford the creeks.

When a bridge was built over Ridley Creek, travelers had to pay what must have seemed an exorbitant toll. The rates posted at the bridge were as follows:

Coach, light waggon, or other pleasure carriage, with four wheels and four horses	25 cents
Do, two horses	15
Chair, sulky, &c.	10
Sleigh with two horses	6
Man and horse	2
Waggon with four horses	12
Do. do two do	8
Cart and horses	4
For every additional horse to carriage of pleasure	4
do to carriage of burden	2

But perhaps it was a good thing, after all, to have these charges at the small stream; they prepared one for the larger charge at such a ferry as that over the Susquehanna, 63 miles from Philadelphia. There the charges ranged from \$2 for "Coach &c. with four horses," to 25 cents for an empty wagon and 50 cents for a cart and two horses.

No wonder an early traveler carefully records the number of streams of all sizes crossed while making a journey!

But toll bridges and ferries were by no means the worst obstacles in the way. Roads were rough and vehicles were often at the repair shop. A blacksmith shop was to be found at every tavern, and there was

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

usually a pressure of work at all times. The traveler who planned to use his own conveyance, if he was wise, would have it thoroughly overhauled before setting out. In 1790, just before starting to Mount Vernon, over this King's Highway, George Washington wrote to a friend:

I have left my coach to receive a thorough repair against I return . . . and I request you will visit Mr. Clarke (into whose hands it is committed) often, to see it well done; and that I may not be disappointed in the time allowed him for the completion. . . . The harness is also left with him, and he has my Ideas on this subject—generally they are, if the wheel harness . . . can be made complete, and look as well as if they were new, then and in that case, he is to make a set of pole-end harness to suit them, both to be plated—but if this cannot be accomplished, the set is to be made entirely new—and in the best style.

Thomas Twining, who passed over this new road six years later, told of his experience in a public conveyance in words that give a vivid picture:

The vehicle was a long car with four benches. Three of them in the interior held nine passengers, and a tenth passenger was seated by the side of the driver on the first bench. A light roof was supported by eight slender pillars, four on each side. Three large leather curtains suspended to the roof, one at each side and one behind, were rolled up or lowered at the pleasure of the passengers. There was no place nor space for luggage, each person being expected to stow his things as he could under his seat or legs. The entrance was in front, over the driver's bench. Of course the three passengers on the back seat were obliged to crawl across all the other benches to get to their places. There were no backs to

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

the benches to support and relieve during a rough and fatiguing journey over a rough and ill-made road. It would be unreasonable to expect perfection in the arrangements of a new country, but though this rude conveyance was not without its advantages and was really more suitable to the existing state of American roads than an English stage-coach would have been, it might have been rendered more convenient in some respects without much additional expense. Then a mere strap behind the seats would have been a great comfort, and the ponderous leather curtains, which extended the whole length of the Waggon, would have been much more convenient, divided into two or three parts, and with a glass, however small, in each division, to give light to the passengers in bad weather and enable them to have a glimpse of the country. . . .

This might be called the description of a pessimist. For contrast one should take a peep into the journal of Francis Baily, who made a tour of America in 1767. He, too, spoke of the necessity of climbing over the passengers in the front to reach the rear seats, but he found this "amusing," and he thought that traveling in America was "very pleasant, as you enjoy the country much more agreeably than when imprisoned in a close coach, inhaling and exhaling the same air a thousand times over, like a cow chewing the cud." He spoke with approval of the democratic method of placing a member of congress by the side of the shoemaker who elected him. "You see no person here take upon him those important airs which you too often meet with in England," he added. He even found amusement in the necessity of getting out and putting his shoulder to the wheel, and this in the most unpleasant weather, as

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

well as in the midst of mire and dirt. One night, when the coachman landed the stage in a bog, and it was necessary to leave it there, with the baggage, while the passengers walked to the nearest house, he did not think of entering his complaint, but told instead of his surprise and pleasure that all the baggage was found intact the next morning.

Humorously the stage coach passenger told of the declivities "down which the waggon descended at a great rate, for not only was it unprovided with a drag to keep it back, but it seemed to be the principle of American driving to go as fast as possible down hill in order to make up for the slowness inevitable on all other parts of the road. This road being newly and roughly formed, furrowed with ruts, and strewn with huge stones which had been separated from the mould or gravel, the jolting of the waggon in these rapid descents was almost insupportable, and even drew forth many a hard exclamation from my companions, accustomed to it as they were. . . . The driver managed his four active little horses with all the skill of an English coachman, although he had little of the appearance of one, having neither his hat on one side, nor his great coat, nor his boots, but a coarse blue jacket, worsted stockings, and thick shoes."

Another difficulty of early travel was due to the fact that "the surface of the land was entangled with the roots of trees, and covered with stones which the plough had recently exposed to the light for the first time, and with clods of dirt not yet broken."

It is easy to sympathize with the passengers who

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

decided that "as the extreme jolting of the waggon had caused a general complaint . . . and the inconvenience might be expected to remain," it would be better to hire some other conveyance. And one can appreciate their disappointment when it was found that the wagon was the only carriage on the road.

Only a few months after the Englishman told of his trying experience, the American Annual Register said:

The Roads from Philadelphia to Baltimore exhibit for the greater part of the way, an aspect of savage desolation. Chasms to the depth of six, eight or ten feet occur at narrow intervals. A stage coach which left Philadelphia on the 5th of February, 1796, took five days to go to Baltimore. The weather for the first four days was good. The roads are in a fearful condition. Coaches are overturned, passengers killed, and horses destroyed by the overwork put upon them. In winter sometimes no stage sets out for two weeks.

Many a weary stage-coach passenger, who had helped for hours in the struggle with roads that seemed bottomless, must have welcomed the approach to Chester and the knowledge that there they would find at least temporary respite from trial. For Chester, the oldest town in Pennsylvania, seemed like a staid and settled community in days when Philadelphia was a mere beginner. In 1708 there were one hundred houses here. In 1836 the number had increased to one hundred and fifty, while four years later the population was only seven hundred and forty.

In 1754 Thomas Pownall spoke of the town as "a good pretty village; a place famous for cyder, as the country people say." William Priest said in 1793:

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

The little town is . . . the same to Philadelphia that Gravesend is to London. Ships outward bound here receive their passengers.

The receipt of passengers by a vessel that sailed from Chester in 1765 is made a part of a most interesting story in Cope and Ashmead's "Historic Homes of Chester and Delaware County," which was said to be based on a letter from a man who knew one of the actors. This is the letter:

Elizabeth Shewell became acquainted with Benjamin West, afterward the celebrated artist, and they fell in love with each other. West, at that time, although descended from a good family, was poor and little known. Stephen Shewell wished his sister to marry another suitor, which she refused to do, in consequence of her attachment to West. The brother objected to West on account of his poverty and obscurity, and he was forbidden to come to the house. Elizabeth Shewell, however, continued to see him elsewhere, and they became engaged to be married. West then determined to go to Europe and prosecute his studies and profession there, and Elizabeth Shewell promised him that when he notified her of his ability to maintain her, and his wish for her to come to him, she would proceed to join him in any part of Europe and marry him. Her brother was informed of her meetings with West and of their engagement. So, to prevent any further intercourse between them, he confined her to her chamber and kept her under lock and key until after West's departure for Europe.

He pursued his studies and profession for some time in various places on the continent; and finally settled in London, where he soon met with sufficient patronage to justify him in calling on Elizabeth Shewell to fulfill her promise. He then made arrangements for her to

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

come in the same vessel that conveyed his request to her, and also, that his father should accompany her on the voyage. Upon the receipt of his message, Elizabeth Shewell prepared for her departure, but her brother was apprised of her intention and again confined her to her chamber.

Her engagement to West was well known in Philadelphia, and her brother's tyrannical treatment of her excited great indignation against him and strong sympathy for the sister. In this state of things the late Bishop White, who was my guest at his last patriarchal visit to Easton, told me that he (then eighteen years of age) and Dr. Franklin (about fifty-nine years of age) and Francis Hopkins (twenty-nine years of age) when the vessel was ready to sail, procured a rope ladder, went to the captain, engaged him to set sail as soon as they brought a lady on board, took John West to the ship, and went at midnight to Stephen Shewell's house, attached the rope ladder to a window in Elizabeth Shewell's chamber, and got her safely out and to the vessel, which sailed a few minutes after she entered it. They were married 9 mo., 2, 1765, and for fifty years their lives were joined in kind and tender companionship, neither of them ever returning to this country.

Some local historians say that this story is not true. The statement was once made in behalf of Miss Shewell's family that there was never the slightest opposition to the engagement. There is, however, at least this bit of truth in the narrative: Miss Shewell did go to England on a vessel that stopped for her at Chester, and she did marry the artist, with whom she lived happily ever after.

One hundred and twenty-one years before the bride-to-be took passage from Chester, the first Swedish



**THE CALEB PUSEY HOUSE, UPLAND; THE OLDEST HOUSE IN PENNSYLVANIA**  
**Here William Penn held council meetings**



**MONUMENT TO JOHN MORTON, SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE,**  
**CHESTER**



**THE ROBINSON HOUSE AT NAAMAN'S CREEK**

The oldest house in Delaware. The square building on the right is a Swedish block house, dating from 1655.

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

settlers landed here, having been sent by the Swedish Company to cultivate a tobacco plantation. It is related that Jöran Kyn was one of these early settlers. He came with Governor Printz on the ship *Fama*, in 1642. At first he made his home, as did others, on Tinicum, or New Gothenberg. When the island became too crowded Kyn went to Chester, or Upland, as he called it, in remembrance of Upland in Sweden. He substituted this name for the Indian Meco-pon-aca (big potatoes). The land to which he was given title extended for a mile and a half above Chester Creek, and was three-quarters of a mile wide, reaching to the Delaware on the east, and to the north as far as Ridley Creek. In 1687 he gave a bit of this land, adjoining his "lot or Garding" "to the use and behoof of . . . the people of God called Quakers, and their successors forever."

Nothing remains in Upland to remind visitors of Kyn. [The most ancient house in old Upland, outside the city limits of Chester, is the Caleb Pusey house, built in 1683, the year after William Penn landed. It is said that the house still retains most of its original features. William Penn occasionally occupied a room in the building while visiting here. A tablet on the stone wall about the house recites these facts.

For a time Penn thought seriously of founding his "great town" at Upland. In his instructions to the Commission, he directed that "the river and creeks be sounded on my side of the river, especially Upland, in order to settle the great town."

After receiving formal possession by treaty he landed on the Delaware, south of Chester Creek. At once he

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

changed the name of the settlement. Turning to a fellow passenger in the ship *Welcome*, he said: "Providence has brought us here safe; thou hast been the companion of my perils; what wilt thou that I shall call this place?" The man replied, "Chester, in remembrance of the city from which I came."

On December 4, 1682, the first Assembly was called together, and very soon it was determined to go farther north for the settlement of the great town.

Forty-two years later the Chester Court House was erected, a building that has since that time been occupied continuously as a public building, the oldest building in the United States so used. A tablet on the left of the entrance records:

This building was erected in 1724, during the reign of George I of England. It was the Court House of Chester County 1724-1786; the Court House of Delaware County 1789-1851; Hall of Chester Borough, 1851-1866; Hall of Chester City Since 1866. In 1739 England declared war against Spain and soldiers were here enlisted for an expedition to Cuba. Here Anthony Wayne rallied and drilled his troops Jan'y 1776. In 1824 Lafayette as Guest of the Nation was entertained in this building.

Across Market Street from the quaint City Hall is the Washington House, built in 1747. The original name of the famous hostelry was the Pennsylvania Arms, but this was changed in honor of the most famous guest the walls ever held, George Washington. Here he received the congratulations of the people on his election to the Presidency, when he was on his way to Philadelphia, on April 20, 1789. It is generally be-

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

lieved that he was also within the walls twelve years earlier, on September 11, 1777, just after the Battle of Brandywine, and that here, at his request, Adjutant-General Pickering wrote to Congress a letter giving the only report of the battle Washington ever made. But there are those who contend that this letter was written from the Columbia Hotel, kept by Mrs. Withey, which was torn down a few years ago to make way for the Columbia office building.

Less than three weeks before the writing of this letter to Congress, Washington had passed through Chester with high hopes. On August 25, with ten thousand troops, he marched through Chester to Naaman's Creek, then on to Wilmington. Next day he was at Gray's Hill, two miles from Head of Elk, within six miles of the scouts of the British, who had landed near that point the day the American commander passed through Chester. The armies kept close together till the Battle of Brandywine was fought.

In September, 1781, Washington hurried this way once more. At Chester he learned of the safe arrival of Count de Grasse in Chesapeake Bay, with twenty-eight sail of the line, and four frigates, and three thousand troops, which were to be sent to join the American Army under the command of Lafayette.

Ten years later Washington noted in his diary a visit to Chester when he was on his way to make a tour of the Southern states. He wrote:

Roads exceedingly deep, heavy and cut in places. . . My equipage & attendance consisted of a Charriot & four horses—a light baggage Waggon of two horses—

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

four saddle horses besides a led one for myself—and five—to wit—my Valet de Chambre, two footmen, Coachman, & Postillion.

In the days of Washington the road from Chester, through Marcus Hook to Claymont, was perhaps half a mile south of the present turnpike, on which the trolley line is laid. The first mention of this lower road was in March, 1695, when the Grand Jury at Upland spoke of the need of a "Bridle Road" from Marcus Hook to Chester.

Marcus Hook, which is built on land granted in 1653 to Captain John Amundsen Beck, for his faithful service, and promises for the future, received its name from an Indian Sachem, Maarte, who lived on the "hook" or point of land on which the town is built. Maarte Hook soon became Marrities Hook. Then the descent to Marcus Hook was easy. At an early day Governor Markham, on the request of the inhabitants, changed the name of the place to Chichester. This is now the name of the township, but for some fortunate reason the village has not been able to get away from the title that speaks of its history.

This old town was one of the haunts of Blackbeard the Pirate, tales of whose escapades frightened the children of the early days. Many efforts were made to capture him, but he always managed to get away before hands could be laid on him.

A short distance from Marcus Hook is Chichester Meeting House, thought by competent judges to be the most quaint of all the meeting houses.

Chichester Meeting was started by a few Friends

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

from New Jersey who settled on the west side of the Delaware River before the arrival of William Penn in 1682. Perhaps the best known of these was William Clayton. Some of them located at Marcus Hook and held a Monthly Meeting on "the 14 day of ye 12 month 1681." Another early record speaks of "the fearst Monthly Meeting held by friends in Chichester ye 17th of the first Month in ye year 1684." William Clayton's son was the first man married in the new meeting.

The first deed for the Chichester property was made by James Brown "4 day of Tenth Month 1688" to William Clayton, Sr., "for the use of the people of God called Quakers of Chichester." The deed was certified by the "Clark's hand in open Court at Chichester, 10th mo 4, 1688."

The original house stood until 1769, when Richard Dutton was directed to build the present house and to put a stone in the gable with the legend R. D. 1769. It is stated in the church records that the builder had a son born to him on February 2, 1769, who lived for exactly a century, and was buried in the graveyard adjoining the church. To his neighbors at Village Green, three miles from the meeting, this son delighted to tell of the Battle of Brandywine, and of seeing afterward the British soldiers on their way to Philadelphia. They took a cow from his father, but he went after it and drove it back home.

William Clayton, Sr., came from Chichester, England, in 1671, first having procured a patent from the British Government to five hundred acres of land in Upper Chichester. It is said that he owned also a tract

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of land near Philadelphia, which is crossed by the present Forty-ninth Street. He became one of the nine justices who sat at Upland in 1681, and was also a member of Penn's Council.

The annals of the family tell of the marriage of his grandson to a daughter of Walter Martin, who donated the ground on which was built St. Martin's Church at Marcus Hook, the deed being dated in 1699. One of the conditions of the gift was that no Quaker should be buried in the graveyard belonging to the church. In return for this gift, it is said, the church honored the giver, and took the name St. Martin.

One of the descendants of William Clayton bought for his son a farm near the railroad station at Claymont. The mansion, which stood on a hill, was called Claymont, an abbreviation of Clayton's Mount. That the origin of the name is not generally known is evident from the fact that one writer on the town says that "it is most appropriately called Claymont, because of the clay soil in the neighborhood."

Thomas J. Clayton, another descendant, who was Judge of the Court of Delaware County, wrote that in his boyhood "the old Post Road from Wilmington to Philadelphia was the central artery for the circulation of general news. Important messages were carried by post horses, which were changed every ten miles. Taverns were located all along the road, about ten miles apart. In those days the 'keepers of public houses,' as tavern keepers invariably called themselves, were looked upon as important persons, several degrees above the common herd in social and political standing."

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

He also gave this picture of the old days on the turnpike:

I have seen the United States mail coach, with an armed guard and trumpeter, come up the Post road in a full gallop, and when the horn was blown, all the drivers on the road to the Philadelphia market immediately pulled out to give free passage to the United States Mail.

Many of these travelers must have been on their way to market with wood, for "coal had not yet come into general use, even in the cities, hickory wood was hauled by horses all the way to Philadelphia, Chester and Wilmington. There was a city officer called the 'corder.' It was his duty to measure every cord of wood brought for sale to the city. Every farmer carefully preserved his woodland, as he supposed the supply would soon become exhausted and his timber lands would bring fabulous prices."

The demand for wood for heating, for the mills and for other purposes, was responsible for the existence of a picturesque class of workers who were frequently seen along the turnpike. They were called "woodmen." Of these men Mr. Clayton wrote:

They were a degree higher in the social scale than "farm hands," and farm hands were one degree higher than "laborers." These woodmen spent the whole time in the woods chopping firewood, getting out fencing materials and ship timber. I have seen them with a rip saw, one man on an elevated log and one standing under it, the man above lifting the saw and the one below drawing it down, sawing out great three-inch planking for shipping. This "ship-stuff," as it was

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called, would be transported on great timber wheels, drawn by five or six horses in a single file, to the ship-yards at Wilmington. Another distinct class of workmen, called "team drivers," did nothing but attend to and drive these teams, by which they transported all articles of heavy merchandise.

The country about Claymont was heavily wooded. "If we desired we could hunt all day without leaving the continuous wood from the south branch of Naaman's Creek at the Post road, as far as Brandywine Summit," Mr. Clayton continued his recollections. "Game was quite plentiful. With an old-fashioned flint-lock gun six feet long we could shoot pheasants, partridges, wild pigeons, woodcock, wild ducks, English snipe, and squirrels. Foxes were so plentiful as to make the preservation of our chickens somewhat difficult. During the hunter's moon the young fellows, with good trained dogs, amused themselves by successful possum and coon hunts. Rabbit hunting with hounds was great sport."

The Naaman's Creek, mentioned by Mr. Clayton, is crossed just after the State Line is passed. This picturesque stream is named, it is thought, for an Indian chief, one of those with whom Governor Printz treated on his arrival in America. Naaman, who belonged to the Minquas tribe, showed his friendship for the settlers on more than one occasion. In 1654, for instance, at a meeting held on Tinicum Island, when ten Indian chiefs were present, complaint was made against the Swedes, and it seemed as if the result of the council was to be unfavorable. But Naaman re-

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

buked the rest for having spoken evil of their friends the Swedes, and his words prevailed. A treaty of friendship followed.

Where the Post Road and the Pennsylvania Railroad cross the creek is one of the most picturesque spots on the route. Facing the turnpike bridge is an ancient house, the older part of which dates from about 1654, though there are those who claim that it was built by Governor Printz in 1640. But the Swedish records indicate that it was built by John Rising, who came to America from Sweden to be Lieutenant Governor under Printz. When he arrived he learned that Printz, having been taken ill, had returned to Europe. Some time later Governor Rising, with nine good men, went up the river in a boat, looking for a good site for a mill. They found a waterfall near the river, in a creek, which bore an Indian name, and decided to locate here.

The ground desired for the saw mill was deeded to the Swedes by the Sachem Peminacha in July, 1654. In October Governor Rising built the block-house which still stands at the right of the house. The narrow port-holes, the nine-foot fireplace, and the spring-house section are just as they were originally.

In 1655 Peter Stuyvesant attacked the block-house. In May, 1910, in the heart of a decayed tree on the premises, a three-inch cannon ball was found which an ordnance expert has pronounced a pre-Revolutionary ball. Probably it was fired from a cannon manned by one of Peter Stuyvesant's men. The ball rests on the mantel in the main room of the house.

On at least two later occasions the block-house was

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under fire, in 1671, when it was captured by the Indians, and in 1776, when it was captured by the British. At the latter date the property was owned by Colonel Thomas Robinson, an officer of the Revolution whose portrait by Peale is in Independence Hall. He was born in the house on March 30, 1751.

During the Revolution the Robinson House, as the property came to be known in 1738, when it came into the possession of Colonel Robinson's ancestor, was the scene of exciting events. On October 31, 1777, Washington ordered Light Horse Harry Lee to assist in removing the stones from the old mill on the place, to prevent the British from obtaining flour. The stones were buried at the rear of the orchard. One of them is now the hearthstone in the main room of the house, while the other is used as a tea table on the lawn at the rear of the house.

On another occasion a squad of British soldiers, seeing several American soldiers take refuge in the house, followed them into the hall as they disappeared up the stairs. Triumphantlly the British guarded the front and rear stairs, both of which opened into the main hall; the latter, being a closed-in stair, shut off the hall by a door. Removing their shoes, the Americans slipped down the closed-in stair, opened a panel in the wall that led to the kitchen, and escaped to their horses. The panel is still shown to visitors.

General Washington was often a guest at Naaman's Creek. On one of his visits he was so pleased with a seedling pear that it was named after him; this was the origin of the celebrated "Washington pear." Here he

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used the sofa now in Independence Hall. Mad Anthony Wayne was another famous guest of the Robinsons'.

To-day the house is owned and occupied by Mrs. Edna A. Robinson, who is a descendant of John Robinson, who came over with the Pilgrims in 1620. The Robinsons who occupied the house for one hundred and twenty-five years were descendants of Thomas Robinson, the Quaker brother of John Robinson.

The house is fitted up as a tea-room, and all who come are made welcome.

The first road to cross the creek at this point was an old Indian trail which led along the Delaware from New Castle to Tinicum. The first bridge was built before 1680. In 1802 this was replaced by the present stone arch bridge, said to be at the very spot where the old trail passed. Until 1832 this was a toll bridge.

The story of the building of the bridge is interesting. In 1800 William Poole was commissioned by the Court to contract for and superintend the erection of a stone arch bridge. On July 30, 1800, Mr. Poole wrote a letter to General Robinson, asking him to superintend its erection. On June 8, 1802, General Robinson wrote on the back of Mr. Poole's letter:

Agreeably to the annexed Request, I have observed with satisfaction the attention of Mr. Williamson in building the Bridge over Naaman's Creek, and 'tis my Opinion he has used every necessary care and industry in the erection thereof.

Beyond the bridge is Claymont station, noted because of its dueling history in the first half of the nine-

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teenth century. On Sunday morning, March 21, 1830, William Miller, of Philadelphia, and Midshipman Charles G. Hunter, of the United States Navy, met just outside the village. For his offense the officer was dismissed from the Navy by order of President Jackson, but he was restored and served through the Mexican War, though he died soon after, a disappointed man. On June 4, 1842, Hon. Thomas F. Marshall, of Kentucky, fought a duel with General James Watson Webb, of New York City, the spot chosen being at the junction of the turnpike and the State Line. A disagreement in Congress led to the fight. Three years later Washington Keith and Morris Meredith fought directly on the line, and both were wounded.

These later duels show how ineffective was the protest made in 1824 by the Philadelphia City Register, which gave an account of all the duels in the United States from 1801 to that date. The purpose of the publication was "to awake more attention to the widespread and overwhelming misery occasioned by dueling." Nearly one hundred had been killed. Some thirty of those who fought were army officers, and about as many were navy officers.

But the records of the King's Highway tell of brave men as well as of assassins. Perhaps the favorite hero tale connected with the road is that of General Cæsar Rodney, to whose memory a memorial is to be erected in Wilmington. How well he deserves this recognition will appear from several extracts from the letters of General Rodney and his brother, Colonel Thomas Rodney, and comments made on them by Thomas F. Bayard.



**CHICHESTER MEETING HOUSE**  
**Between Village Green and Boothwyn**



**THE RICHARDSON HOMESTEAD, 1765, WILMINGTON**



**OLD SWEDES' CHURCH, WILMINGTON, 1698**



**THE TATNALL HOMESTEAD, WILMINGTON**

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

From Philadelphia, on June 7, 1768, the General wrote to his brother:

Sir:—The morning after I parted with you, I drove to New Castle by dinner time, and intended the morning following to have gone on to Chester; but when I ordered my horses in the chariot found the best horse so ill, that we were obliged to stay that day at New Castle that he might grow better; but, finding he grew worse, I borrowed a saddle and bridle and set out on the other horse. . . . I got to Philadelphia on Saturday, and on Monday applied to doctors concerning the sore on my nose, who all, upon examination, pronounced it a cancer. . .

If Mr. Rodney had followed advice and gone to England for treatment, the disease might have been arrested, but he was a member of the Legislature, and he felt that he was needed at home.

For eight years he was so engrossed in the people's business that he continued to neglect the cancer.

In 1776, when independence was agitated in Congress, General Rodney went down into Delaware to consult his constituents about the question. While there he did his best to subdue discontent and to promote harmony of action in the cause of liberty.

While he was absent, and sooner than he had anticipated, the question of independence came up in Congress. Messrs. McKean and Read, the other two delegates from Delaware, could not agree. When the vote was taken on July 1 nine colonies were in favor of Richard Henry Lee's resolution, "that the United States are and ought to be, free and independent states." Pennsylvania and South Carolina were at

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this time against the resolution. Delaware did not vote.

Thomas McKean, who favored the resolution, sent a mounted messenger, at his own expense, with instructions to find General Rodney and bring him to Philadelphia, post haste.

Mr. Bayard tells what followed:

Eighty long miles lay between Dover and Philadelphia. Mr. McKean's messenger could not have been dispatched until late on the afternoon of July 1, after the adjournment, and it would have been a remarkable horse or a relay of horses that could bring him to Dover before the night of July 2.

At one of his farms, "Byfield," or "Poplar Grove," several miles out of Dover, he must have found Mr. Rodney, and when McKean's message was received, you may know how little time there was for dainty preparation, barely enough for tightening of saddle girth and spurs, before the good horse was ready again to be mounted, and our hero began his immortal ride on that hot and dirty July day to carry into the Congress of the Colonies the vote he held in trust for the people of Delaware, and which was needed to make the Declaration of Independence the unanimous act of thirteen states.

Tired and dusty, the Delaware delegate appeared just a little while before the adjournment of the session. He was met at the door by Mr. McKean, who had been looking for him with great anxiety. A few minutes later, when Delaware was called, he rose and voted for independence.

At the time of this memorable ride the cancer had become quite painful. One account says that Rodney's face was swathed in bandages when he reached the

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

State House. Fortunately, the cancer did not cause death until he had the satisfaction of seeing independence an accomplished fact.

Just a little while before the death of Cæsar Rodney, Jacob Hiltzheimer told of a visit of Washington to Wilmington, December 16, 1783. His account was quoted from the *Pennsylvania Packet* of December 23, 1783:

Last evening his excellency general Washington, arrived in this borough, on his way to his seat in Virginia; previous to his arrival he was met by the governor and council, the attorney-general, and other Civil officers of the State, officers of the army and other gentlemen, who escorted him into town; on his arrival he was saluted by thirteen discharges of cannon; an elegant supper was provided, whilst the inhabitants demonstrated their joy by making large bonfires, &c.

Four years later Washington made another triumphal journey along the King's Highway, on his way from Philadelphia to Mount Vernon. He rode in a chariot, accompanied by a Mr. Blair, who was his guest. On the journey he had a narrow escape when one of the horses fell through a bridge. The other, with the chariot, was on the point of following, but by great exertion was saved, Washington related in his diary on September 1, 1787.

Nearly one hundred and fifty years before this trip that might have proved fatal to Washington—in 1638—the Swedes made the first permanent settlement on the Delaware. They landed at the foot of what is now Sixth Street in Wilmington and immediately built Fort Christiana. At this fort a prosperous fur trade was

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

carried on with the Indians. It is said that the first year thirty thousand skins were shipped to Sweden.

These early settlers reclaimed many hundred acres of lowlands to the north of Wilmington, along the present King's Highway and between it and the river. The Brandywine Meadows are a monument to their industry.

The references made to Wilmington and its vicinity by early travelers who passed over the road are full of interest to the modern tourist.

In 1745, David Bush wrote to Thomas Hopkinson:

The Country sixty years ago, particular on the Creek & River Side, was settled by Dutch & Sweads which seldom went from the Settlement and when they had occasion to cross the Creeks, their usual method was to swim over their Horses, while they crossed in a Canoe; between forty and fifty years ago, the English beginning to settle and make a figure in the country, and perceiving a real necessity for the Safety of Travelers that a Ferry should be Erected, application being made to the Court, then held at Newcastle, for liberty to erect a ferry on Christeen, the Court granted it.

The writer proposed that he be permitted to equip a new ferry, one of the advantages of which was to be "the Lowering the price to 3½ d. for Ferrying Man and Horse over, which I judge is full much."

A year later Peter Kalm noted with interest that redoubts had been thrown up hastily for protection against the French and Spanish privateers who, it was feared, might come up the Delaware.

The only comment made by Thomas Pownall, who passed this way in 1754, was to the effect that Wilming-

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

ton "is a regular well-built town; but not travel enough to draw together a sufficient number of people to compleat it to its plan."

In 1794, William Priest passed along the road in a hired "caravan with four horses, which is here called a stage." He notes that he slept at Wilmington, "a pleasantly situate town on the bank of a creek." Then he called attention to the fact that there were "about thirty square-rigged vessels, beside sloops and schooners, belonging to this port."

Ten years later a more observant visitor told of a visit to the Brandywine mills:

The mills are mostly in the hands of friends, and although not the most extensive are in construction and situation perhaps equal to any. They are eight in number, and each grinds upon an average, per day, about three tons and a half of flour, and about ten tons of Indian meal; going through all the processes of grinding, packing, &c. They are so situated that near vessels receive and discharge their cargoes alongside the mills. The neighborhood of these mills is romantic and beautiful, and is one amongst the many pleasant spots I have seen in this country.

Samuel Breck in 1809 crossed the Brandywine on a bridge then building, which was suspended on iron chains on the principle of the bridge at Falls of Schuylkill. He "traversed Wilmington without stopping," yet "one could perceive that this Capital of the state of Delaware is in a flourishing condition, and may contain about two thousand souls."

One of these early visitors called attention to the fact that part of Wilmington stands on ground belong-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

ing to the Swedish church, "which annually receives certain rents, out of which they pay the Minister's salary, and employ the rest for other uses."

Old Swedes' Church is practically the only monument left on the original Swedish settlement, though it was not the first church built by the Swedes. One of the first things done by Peter Minuit after landing with his colony on Christiana was to provide a place of worship within the fort. In 1667 the Crane Hook Church was built on the banks of Christiana and Brandywine Creeks. Wherever possible, early churches were located near streams, for there were no roads, no carriages, and no bridges; boats were the only means of transportation.

The cornerstone of Old Swedes' was laid on May 28, 1698, by Rev. Ericus Biorck. Money was scarce, and he feared that the progress of the work would be slow, yet he managed to push it. "I made a bargain with bricklayers and carpenters, and bound them and me so strongly, that otherwise the work would not have been finished in less than three years." The amount of stone work done is evident from the statement that the walls up to the windows are three feet thick, while above that point they are two feet thick. The dedication took place on July 4, 1699, the name Trinity Church being given.

Wilmington, as first laid out, was some distance from the church, and for one hundred years many of the worshippers traveled at least half a mile over wretched roads to reach the quiet spot. "Its situation was secluded and quiet," one historian has written. "The scenery all around it was indeed beautiful. The Christiana flowed by between its green bordering of reeds,

## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

but a few feet from the churchyard wall. Behind it was the beautiful Brandywine, and beyond it the majestic Delaware. Rich green meadows lay immediately around the church."

The tower was added in 1802, the gift of Thomas Cole, whose grave may be seen near its base. Many other graves attract attention, but perhaps the one that causes most comment is marked by a stone in the original brick floor of the church, placed there to the memory of a child who died at the age of nineteen days. What a contrast to the more than two centuries of the history of the building!

For twelve years after the erection of the new Holy Trinity Church some distance away the old Swedish relic was not in use, and it became quite dilapidated, but in 1842 it was put in good condition, and most of the time since services have been held in it.

The old-time quiet of the neighborhood has given way to bustle and confusion. On three sides, the houses of foreigners cluster thickly about the church. On the fourth side is the Pennsylvania Railroad. Passengers entering Wilmington from the north should look for the quaint building and the graveyard. It may be seen on the right, a moment before entering the Wilmington station.

Another old church building is the original edifice of the First Presbyterian congregation, which stands, surrounded by its old cemetery, in the heart of the city's business district, at Ninth and Market Streets. For many years this building has been used as a museum by the Delaware Historical Society.

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Of all the objects of interest in the museum the oddest is the wooden statue of Washington, of heroic size, which was erected in Battery Park, New York, in 1796. When this was removed it was sold to a relic hunter for \$300.

Among the many old residences in Wilmington is the Tatnall homestead at 1807 Market Street, where Lafayette was once entertained. It is thought that the older part of the house, the Nineteenth Street front, was built by the first Edward Tatnall, who came to Wilmington in 1735. In 1809 the Market Street front was built. The original house faced the Brandywine and overlooked the Tatnall farm. At that time Nineteenth Street was a country lane. Those who have opportunity to enter the house will be interested in the massive doors, the marble mantels and the narrow cupboards at each side of the mantels.

Beyond the northern city limits is the Richardson homestead, built in 1765, as is shown by the date stone in the southern gable wall. Before building this house Richard Richardson lived in the small brick house nearer the road, almost directly in front of the larger house. Tradition says that this was built in 1723. Port-holes for defense are in the wall of this earlier building. The land on which the houses stand was bought by John Richardson from the Swedes, in the seventeenth century. For a long time he operated a mill. About him grew the thriving village of Newport, a shipping point to which the farmers from Chester and Lancaster Counties brought their grain in wagons for shipment to market.



**LATIMERIA, WILMINGTON**



## KING'S HIGHWAY TO WILMINGTON

Probably the best known house in Wilmington is Delamore Place, built by Captain Samuel Boyer Davis, the hero of the defense of Lewes, Delaware, against the British squadron, in April, 1813. It has always been a source of wonder that he was able to withstand the attack of the enemy, for he had only untrained militia at his back. Colonel Davis persisted in his refusal to surrender the town and when the cannon balls from the guns of the fleet fell in the streets they were gathered up, loaded in the one American battery, and sent back with the customary good marksmanship of American gunners.

It is said that the intrepid leader camped over night on what became the site of Delamore Place, and that he was so much pleased with it he determined some day to build there. At any rate, after serving in the army until 1819, he returned to Wilmington. There he learned that the owner of the ground whose situation had pleased him so much had begun to build and was unable to finish. At once he bought the place and completed the house, whose walls are nearly three feet thick. Here he spent many of the years that intervened before his death, in 1854.

But perhaps Delamore Place is best known as the residence of Thomas F. Bayard, during his career as Senator, Secretary of State, and Ambassador to England. For a time it was occupied also by Howard Pyle, the artist.

It is claimed that no house on or near the King's Highway has had more men of note within its walls than old Delamore Place. President Polk was once a

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guest at dinner here. General Louis Cass and Stephen A. Douglas visited in the house, while President Cleveland spent a Sunday here in 1893.

Near the southern boundary of the city, between Maryland Avenue and the Pennsylvania Railroad, is the distinguished looking mansion Latimeria, which was built in 1815. The builder was William Warner, who took an original method of selecting a plan. The story is that he gave a dinner to a company of his friends and requested each gentleman guest to bring with him a set of plans for the house he proposed to build. The favored plan was brought by Eleuthere Irenée du Pont, founder of the great powder manufacturing house.

In 1838 the house became the property of John R. Latimer, a descendant of James Latimer, a member of the Council of Safety of 1776, and president of the Delaware Assembly that was the first to ratify the Constitution of the United States. He was the great-grandfather of the present owner of the house, who delights to show visitors the mementos of the past within its walls. Among these are two large paintings of the tea ship owned by John Latimer, who was a Philadelphia tea merchant. Other treasures are preserved in a cabinet in the library. This is filled with wonderful tea sets which the merchant brought from China, as well as other rare specimens of Oriental ware.

The house is still a prominent feature in the landscape, which it has dominated since first the travelers on the King's Highway paused to admire the graceful lines of a building that is unlike anything to be found on this or any other road.

### III

#### THE BALTIMORE TURNPIKE

**O**N May 4, 1833, Samuel Breck, of Philadelphia, wrote a prophecy of the time when stage coaches on roads out of Philadelphia to Baltimore and Washington would be things of the past. He said:

Undoubtedly, a traveler will be able to go from Baltimore to New York by the light of a summer's sun when the locomotive shall be placed on the Amboy railroad. An invitation to a three o'clock dinner may now be complied with by the individual who takes his breakfast in either of these cities; and with the loco, when established, he may start from one city in the morning, and return again in the evening from a visit to the other.

Before he left America, however, he was not so enthusiastic. After telling of a journey in an ugly box attached to a "loco," he asked:

Shall we be much longer kept by this toilsome fashion of hurrying, hurrying, from starting (those who can afford it) on a journey with our own horses and moving slowly, surely and profitably through the country, with the power of enjoying its beauty and be the means of creating good inns? Undoubtedly, a line of post-horses and post-chaises would long ago have been established along our great roads had not steam monopolized everything. Steam, so useful in many respects, interferes with the comfort of traveling, destroys every salutary distinction in society, and overturns by its

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

whirligig power the once rational, gentlemanly and safe mode of getting along on a journey.

He gave an amusing description of the trials endured "for the sake of doing uncomfortably in two days what would be done delightfully in eight or ten":

If one could stop when one wanted, and if one were not locked up in a box with fifty or sixty tobacco chewers; and the engine and fire did not burn holes in one's clothes; and the springs and hinges didn't make such a racket; and the smell of the smoke, of the oil and of the chimney did not poison one; and if one could see the country, and was not in danger of being blown sky high or kicked off the rails,—it would be the perfection of traveling.

A second time he assumed the rôle of prophet, writing what in these days sounds like an anticipation of the automobile:

After all the old fashioned way . . . with one's own horses and carriages, with liberty to dine decently in a decent inn and be master of one's movements, with the delight of seeing the country and getting along rationally, is the mode to which I cling, and which will be adopted again by the generations of after time.

When the first petitions were presented for the building of a turnpike on the route of the present Baltimore Road, the petitioners did not think of any means of communication from city to city but the stage coach. They were quite content to look forward to a speed of from six to nine or ten miles an hour, and they were sure that a second road from Philadelphia toward Baltimore would be profitable. Evidently the authorities agreed with them, for in 1809 the Phila-



THE BRIDGE OVER DARBY CREEK



## THE BALTIMORE TURNPIKE

delphia, Brandywine, and New London Turnpike Company was chartered to build by way of Chadd's Ford to the State line toward Baltimore. On April 2, 1811, permission was given to the builders to lay the route "over the road leading from Schuylkill to Darby, commonly called the Woodlands Road, where said road diverges from the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike."

An early guidebook names but four points in the first section of this early road: Hamiltonville, two miles; Wrightstown, sixteen miles; Chadsford, twenty-five miles; and Kennett Square, thirty-three miles.

Most of the country through which the road passes for the first ten miles of the course has been so well built up that old landmarks are scarce. Some of them may be picked out by the careful observer, however. For instance, there is the house at Clifton Heights, between the turnpike and the railroad, built in 1729, and in Swarthmore, on the campus of Swarthmore College, is the house of Benjamin West, the artist.

But those who have time for a short side trip from Swarthmore will find, within a space of two miles, not only many old houses, but industries which had their beginning before the Constitution was framed, as well as sites and relics to which pilgrimage should be made by everybody who delights in the picturesque and the unusual.

The way to the glen where history was made is through Swarthmore, then down Crum Creek until Avondale, the mansion of Thomas Leiper, is reached. The house is on the right, built on the side of a hill.

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

The walk from the creek road to the front door leads from a gateway whose posts are great stone slabs from the old Leiper quarry near by.

Thomas Leiper, the Genius of the Glen, came to America from Scotland in 1764, when he was nineteen years old. At first he lived in Virginia, where he became interested in the tobacco business. Later he came to Philadelphia. His first tobacco warehouse was at 9 North Water Street. In 1774 he was known as a manufacturer of snuff, and his place of business was at 274 Market Street.

The canny Scot, when looking for a site for a new snuff manufactory, was attracted by the water power ready to his hand on Crum Creek. Here he opened a stone quarry, built a snuff mill, and a cotton mill, and a grist mill, and erected substantial stone houses for his quarrymen, which are occupied to-day by the Italian successors of the laborers of one hundred and thirty years ago.

The crowning feature of the glen was, and still is, the mansion built in 1785. This is known as Avondale Place, the name of the village of quarry workmen being Avondale. From the creek side the old house is seen to be four stories high, but from the hillside it appears to be but a regulation two story and attic house.

The most striking feature of the house is the exquisitely simple portico and doorway, said to be the finest entrance in Delaware County. The steps leading to the portico are worn with the passage of many feet. The pavement at either side of those steps is of marble

## THE BALTIMORE TURNPIKE

brought to America as ballast in one of the Leiper ships.

At the side of the house is a curious structure that looks like a bank vault. The Genius of the Glen was far from banks, so he built this strong house that could defy the attempts of thieves to enter it. Even to-day a cracksman would have to use much ingenuity to get inside. The walls are two feet thick, the ceiling is vaulted and re-enforced, the door is iron-bound, and the windows are narrow slits which widen toward the interior. To-day it is used as a den by Miss Leiper, the owner of the old homestead. The small iron-bound chest in which especially valuable articles were stored is now a wood-box. When this is empty two men would find it difficult to lift it.

Thomas Leiper was a man of vision. He sought a better means of getting to tidewater the product of his quarries than ox-wagons and dirt roads could give. In 1791 he asked permission of the Pennsylvania Assembly to cut a canal from the quarry to tidewater. The petition was supported by many Philadelphia business men, but others objected. The permission sought was declined, on the ground that the scheme was "chimerical, visionary and ruinous."

For twenty-one years the quarryman struggled along with inadequate transportation facilities. In September, 1809, on a vacant tract beside the Bull's Head tavern, on Front Street near Poplar Street, Philadelphia, he directed John Thomson—civil engineer, father of John Edgar Thomson, builder of parts of the Pennsylvania Railroad system, and for twenty-seven years president of that system—and a

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Scotch millwright named Somerville, in the construction of a trial track one hundred and eighty feet long. The rails of wood rested on sleepers eight feet apart. The grade was one and a half inches to the yard.

Those who watched the operation were incredulous when they were told that the builders expected to see a horse drag a heavy load up the incline. They prepared to jeer when a car with grooved wheels was placed on the track and loaded with five tons. To their amazement one horse pulled the car with ease to the end of the line, though several horses would have had a hard task with a similar load on a level road.

Then Thomas Leiper was ready to let the contract for a railroad one mile long, to be built from his quarries on Crum Creek, across to tidewater on Ridley Creek. John Thomson secured the contract. For nineteen years this was operated, the first practical railroad in the country. The first track was of wood, but the friction of the flanges of the iron wheels soon wore out the wood. A track of stone was then substituted. The cars were drawn by horses and oxen.

In 1828 Thomas Leiper's son, George Grey Leiper, who lived at Lapidea, a short distance from Avondale Place, succeeded in securing from the Legislature the permission to build a canal, which had been denied his father. The canal as built had two locks. One of these has almost entirely disappeared, though the second, not far from Avondale, is in a good state of preservation.

In 1829 the canal was opened for traffic. The first



AVONDALE

"The most beautiful doorway in Delaware County"



AVONDALE, THOMAS LEIPER'S HOUSE, 1785  
On Crum Creek, near Swarthmore



THOMAS LEIPER'S PRIVATE BANK VAULT, AVONDALE



THE THOMAS LEIPER LOCK OF THE LEIPER CANAL, NEAR AVONDALE

## THE BALTIMORE TURNPIKE

boat to enter the upper lock, the *William Strickland*, carried a load of guests and a brass band. When the second lock was reached the Delaware County Volunteer Battalion and the Pennsylvania Artillerists were on hand to give the martial salute.

The canal was a success—too much of a success, in fact—for so much water was required to run it that the various mills were deprived of their power. A second railroad was thereupon built, down Crum Creek to the Chester turnpike and beyond. This road is still in use; it is operated by the Baltimore and Ohio Railway Company.

The right of way of the original railway, across the ridge from Avondale quarry to Ridley Creek, may still be traced by the embankment, on the property of State Senator Sproul, the present owner of the land on which Lapidea, George Leiper's house, stood. In the Senator's new house are some of the old mantels from Lapidea.

Passengers by the Chester Short Line, which passes Leiperville half a mile to the east of the Chester turnpike, are sometimes told that the narrow-gauge road along the north bank of Crum Creek, between the car line and the pike, is the original Leiper road. The fact that this road also leads from a large quarry gives color to the statement. Those who start on this false scent should follow the narrow-gauge road to a small footbridge across the creek. A private road leads from this to the Chester road. From Chester road Fairview road leads up the creek to the Avondale quarry.

The road to the quarry leads past the Leiperville

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Presbyterian Church, organized in 1818. In the original building Andrew Jackson, Elisha Kent Kane, James Buchanan and Harriet Lane, Buchanan's beautiful niece, were worshipers more than once.

Thomas Leiper had time for other than business activities. He was the first sergeant of the First Troop of Light Horse, later the City Troop, he was at the side of General Mercer when he fell on the battlefield of Princeton, and later he welcomed to his city home many of the makers of early history. It is said that in his home, in 1800, Jefferson was nominated for the Presidency.

Those who go down Crum Creek from Swarthmore should continue the trip along the creek and over toward Ridley Creek, to Waterville. Near the trolley from Chester to Media, on a hill at the left, is the house which one of the sons of John Sharpless, immigrant, built in 1699. Several hundred yards from the house, on the bank of Ridley Creek, is the great boulder against which John Sharpless himself built his first house, in 1682. Here was the start of the Sharpless family in America, one of the most prominent of the Quaker families. Isaac Sharpless, long President of Haverford College, is a descendant.

From Crum Creek, it is easy to reach the Providence Road, one of the historic highways of Delaware County. Several of the best of the inns for which the county was famous in early days may be found along this road. One of these, Providence Inn, at Media, has been converted into a hospital. Another, the Rose Tree Inn, is located a short distance above Media, at

## THE BALTIMORE TURNPIKE

the intersection of Providence Road and the Rose Tree Road. The old signboard of the inn has been appropriated by the Rose Tree Hunt, whose club house is located directly across the Providence Road.

Fox-hunting has been a popular diversion in Delaware, Chester and Montgomery counties since early days, though there is no record of an organized hunt in these counties during colonial times. The first hunt in the vicinity of Philadelphia was the Gloucester Fox Hunting Club, organized December 13, 1766, in the Coffee House at the corner of what is now Front and Market streets, Philadelphia. On the list of the one hundred and twenty-five members were the names Wharton, Willing, Chew, Mifflin, Cadwalader, Leiper and Penrose. Captain Samuel Morris, who later organized the City Troop, was the first president. The first huntsman was "Old Natty," a slave belonging to Captain Morris. In his charge, at one time, was a pack of sixteen couples of hounds. Most of the hunting was done in New Jersey, but sometimes the hounds were brought across the river and more than once they picked up the trail of the fox among the hills where the Rose Tree Hunt has its headquarters.

During the years since the Gloucester Hunt disbanded, in 1818, there have been a number of successors. Perhaps the most famous of these are the Radnor Hunt and the Rose Tree Hunt, though long before these were organized many farmers and their friends turned aside from work to the pursuit of the fox. Bayard Taylor, in "The Story of Kennett," tells of one of these gatherings:

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The owners of the hounds picked out their several animals and dragged them aside, in which operation they were uproariously assisted by the boys. The chase in Kennett, it must be confessed, was but a very faint shadow of the old English pastime. It had been kept up, in the neighborhood, from the force of habit in the Colonial times, and under the depression which the strong Quaker element among the people exercised upon all sports and recreations. The breed of hounds had considerably degenerated, and few, even of the richer farmers, could afford to keep thoroughbred hunters for this exclusive object. Consequently all the features of the pastime had become rude and imperfect, and, although very respectable gentlemen still gave it their countenance, there was a growing suspicion that it was a questionable if not demoralizing diversion.

The Rose Tree Fox Hunting Club is said to be the oldest in the country. It was formed in 1873 at the Rose Tree Inn, by a company of riders who for years had made a practice of organizing a hunt, bringing together riders and hounds as they could. As early as 1853 two riders had kept their hounds at the tavern. There were famous hounds and daring riders in those days; tales are still told of their exploits. Indeed, the first members had gained so much experience in following the hounds that for many years no Master of the Hounds or Huntsman was required.

From the Rose Tree Hunt return may be made through Media to the Baltimore Road. It is of interest to note that the town is built on seven hundred acres of the plot of about twelve hundred and fifty acres sold by William Penn to Peter Taylor and his



**ROCK AT WATERVILLE, ON RIDLEY CREEK**  
Where John Sharpless built his first house in 1682



**OLD PROVIDENCE INN**  
Now the Media Hospital



**THE BLACK HORSE TAVERN, 1739**  
Edgemont Road and Baltimore Pike, now the residence of Mr. Allen Cunningham

## THE BALTIMORE TURNPIKE

brother William, for a little more than ten cents an acre.

At the intersection of Edgemont Road, beyond Media, is the residence of Allen Cunningham, remodeled in 1915 from the old Black Horse Inn which dates from 1739. On November 27 of that year William Noblit asked permission to keep tavern in "a newly built and Commodious stone house upon the great road Leading from Chester to the Valley." He argued that the tavern was a necessity for the public generally, and that it was especially needed because it was located "about three-quarters of a mile from the Presbyterian Meeting-house which Commonly is a great resort of people," some of them "having ten or fifteen miles to travel to the sd. place of worship."

Probably many of the members of the church to which Landlord Noblit referred in his petition—Middletown Presbyterian Church, at Elwyn, a short distance down the Edgemont Road, which was founded in 1778—would not have agreed that they needed a tavern for use between services. They had other means of passing the time. One of the treasured possessions of the church is a folio volume, inscribed thus on a blank page:

This Book call'd M<sup>r</sup> Baxter's Directary, was given by y<sup>e</sup> Reverend D<sup>r</sup> Isaac Watts of London to the Protestant Dissenters usually assembling for Worship at Middletown Meeting House in Pennsylvania, that people who came from far, and spend their whole day there, may have something proper to entertain themselves with, or to read to one another between the seasons of worship for morning and afternoon: & 'tis for this end entrusted to y<sup>e</sup> care of the Protestant Dis-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

senting Minister who preaches there and to his successors, to be used by him or them in their weekly Studys, and to be secured and devoted to the Use of the Congregation on y<sup>e</sup> Lord's days.

January 30th: 1735-6.

The Book is Committed to the Care of M<sup>r</sup> Berry Hawley to be Carried over to Pennsylvania, and after he has kept it in his own hands and made the best use of it for six months, that is till the 30th of July next, he shall deliver it to the hands of the present Protestant Dissenting Minister for the purpose aforementioned.

In the beautiful graveyard of the Middletown church are two quaint and interesting tombstones a little more than a foot wide and not much higher. Near them are two venerable chestnut trees, remarkable for their vast size, each being not less than twenty-five feet in circumference and still bearing fruit. The inscriptions on the stones are as follows:

MARTHA DICKEY  
DECEASED  
AGVST T  
HE TWEN  
TY FIRST  
1731

On the footstone is:  
HIR AGE  
TWO YEA  
RS AND S  
IX MONT  
HS

JAMES COOPER  
DECEASED THE  
FORTH DAY OF  
NOVEMBER IN  
THE YEAR OF  
GOD 1731

On the footstone is:  
HIS AGE FIF  
TY TWO YE  
ARS

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Another stone in the graveyard has this record:

Here lieth the body of Bernhard Van Laer, M. D.,  
Physissian in Physick, who departed this life January  
26, 1790, aged 104 years.

It is recorded that, in his one hundredth year, Dr. Van Laer rode on horseback from Marple to his Chester County farm, a distance of thirty miles, in one day. In his one hundred and second year burglars entered his house and demanded to be told the hiding place of his savings. Angered at his refusal, they abused him. He never recovered from the effects.

Not far from the grave of the "physissian" is this inscription:

Samuel Crozer, died 1747

My glass is run,

My work is done,

My body under ground;

Intombed in Clay

Until the day

I hear the trumpet sound.

About as far up the Edgemont Road from the old Black Horse as Middletown church is below it, is the historic settlement Lima. Here, in 1806, Philip Yarnall was given leave to open a public house. The place was then called Middletown Cross Roads, but soon after the Pineapple tavern was opened the settlement won a new name. There was so much disorder at the tavern that the crossroads came to be known as Wrangle-town. Maps of the period record this unpleasant name. The reputation of the Pineapple became unsavory and the license was forfeited the next year. Joseph Yar-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

nall succeeded in securing a renewal in 1816. He added to the evil reputation of Wrangletown, and in 1819 the license was finally revoked.

Some distance down the branch of Chester Creek, from Markham, near Chester Heights, are the ivy-covered walls of the second paper mill in America—the Ivy Mill, founded by Thomas Willcox in 1727. The ivy on the picturesque ruin grew from a root brought by the founder from his home in Devonshire, England. In this mill was made the paper used by the Colonies for paper money and during many decades by the United States Government for its bank notes.

The Glen Mills, located several miles up the main Chester Creek from Wawa, were later built by descendants of Thomas Willcox. The paper business of the Glen Mills is still carried on.

When the Ivy Mill was in its glory the boys of the neighborhood went to a stone schoolhouse which stands on the left of the road to Glen Mills, within sight of the turnpike, on the right. The roof of this building will soon be gone, and the walls will probably be torn down before many years; but it will be long before the old residents cease to pass on tales of the severity of masters who taught in this subscription school when the United States was young. Perhaps it was standing even when the British Army marched down the turnpike from the field of Brandywine and turned into the road to Chester, at Concordville.

Less than a mile and a half beyond Concordville the Wilmington Road intersects the turnpike. This



**THE ROSE TREE INN, NEAR MEDIA**



**WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS, NEAR CHADD'S FORD**



**LAFAYETTE'S HEADQUARTERS, NEAR CHADD'S FORD**



**TURNPIKE BRIDGE OVER THE BRANDYWINE, AT CHADD'S FORD**

## THE BALTIMORE TURNPIKE

leads to the south, and crosses the curious north boundary line of the state of Delaware. On the map of Nicholas Scull, dated 1759, this boundary is called "Circle line." The story of the "circle line," the only boundary of the kind in the United States, is interesting. June 14, 1680, William Penn asked Charles II to give him a territory north of Maryland, in payment of a debt of £16,000, money advanced by his father to the government. Suggestion was made later that the northern boundary of the territory should extend twelve miles north of New Castle. "But I do not understand why it is precisely necessary to insist on just such a number of miles, more or less, in a country of which we know so little," was the comment of one of whom the request was made. Yet Penn insisted, and when the boundaries of what were long known as the lower counties of Pennsylvania were fixed, it was decreed that the northern line should be "on a circle drawn at twelve miles distance from New Castle northward and eastward."

The king who agreed to this strange boundary little thought that in less than one hundred years a British army would be opposed by the soldiers of the colonies, only three or four miles north of the point where Brandywine Creek crosses this "Circle line." On September 10, 1777, Washington and his men were waiting at Chadd's Ford, prepared to block the progress of the British who had landed at Head of Elk on Chesapeake Bay. The battle which followed next day opened four miles north of the Ford. This point may be reached conveniently by taking the Wilmington

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Road to the north as far as Dilworthtown. At Dilworthtown a ride of two miles on the road to the left takes the traveler by the point where Lafayette was wounded, past the center of the battlefield, past the Friends' graveyard where many American soldiers were buried, and to the place where was the first firing between Cornwallis and Washington. Cornwallis's headquarters after the battle were not far north of Dilworthtown. General Howe's headquarters were on a cross road that leaves the Wilmington road about a mile south of Dilworthtown. Lafayette made his headquarters in a stone house on the Baltimore Turnpike, near the Brandywine Baptist Church—which was organized in 1715—and Washington's headquarters were just beyond the church. These buildings on the pike may readily be identified by the tablets on the trees. Lafayette's headquarters is especially noteworthy because of the great tree between the barn and the house. The house was at the time of the battle a tavern kept by Gideon Gilpin. When Lafayette was in America in 1825 he visited the place and talked to Gilpin, who was then on his deathbed.

Less than a mile beyond Washington's headquarters is the covered bridge over Brandywine Creek. This beautiful stream was called Fish Kill by the Swedes. The present name was given by the Dutch, it is said, after a vessel loaded with brandy had been wrecked near the point where the creek empties into the Delaware.

Eight miles farther on is Kennett Square, the birthplace and the home in later life of Bayard Taylor. As

## THE BALTIMORE TURNPIKE

a boy Taylor wandered over almost every foot of the territory for miles around, and gained the familiarity with the country that enabled him later to describe it with such charm in "The Story of Kennett."

One almost imagines that he can identify the scene described in this passage:

Having crossed the creek on a flat log, secured with stakes at either end, a few more paces brought her to the warm, gentle knoll, upon which stood the farmhouse. Here, the wood ceased, and the creek, sweeping around to the eastward, embraced a quarter of a mile of rich bottom-land, before entering the rocky dell below. It was a pleasant seat, and the age of the house denoted that one of the earliest settlers had been quick to perceive its advantages. A hundred years had already elapsed since the masons had run up those walls of rusty hornblende rock, and it was even said that the leaden window-sashes, with their diamond-shaped panes of greenish glass, had been brought over from England, in the days of William Penn. In fact, the ancient aspect of the place—the tall, massive chimney at the gable, the heavy, projecting eaves, and the holly-bush in a warm nook beside the front porch, had, nineteen years before, so forcibly reminded one of Howe's soldiers of his father's homestead in mid-England, that he was numbered among the missing after the Brandywine battle, and presently turned up as a hired hand on the Barton farm.

Taylor's description of the Deane Mansion was evidently drawn from life. Just such houses may be found to-day within a few miles of Kennett Square:

The Deane Mansion stood opposite the Unicorn Tavern. When built, ninety years previous, it had been considered a triumph of architecture; the mate-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

rial was squared logs from the forest, dovetailed, and overlapping at the corners, which had the effect of rustic quoins, as contrasted with the front, which was plastered and yellow-washed. A small portico, covered with a tangled mass of eglantine and coral honeysuckle, with a bench at each end, led to the door; and the ten feet of space between it and the front paling were devoted to flowers and rose-bushes.

During years of wandering in Europe and America, the author of these descriptions was sustained by the thought of Mary Agnew, a playmate in childhood, long his promised wife. But she died, and her death, instead of spoiling his life, roused him to nobler efforts. In his journal, a few days after her death, he recorded this prayer:

Almighty Father, who knowest the burden of every heart, help me to bear the cruel sorrow which has fallen upon me. Remove the weakness and blindness of my rebellious soul, that I may see thy ways more clearly, and still the outcry of my heart. Soften the bitterness of my grief, that I may not fail to praise thee and love thee, with the same confiding spirit as of old. Suffer me to become all that she hoped of me, all that I believe I may become, if thy blessing sanctions the labors of my life. Help me to be purer and better than I have been; help me to toil more faithfully and zealously than I yet have toiled.

For years he had owned to "a slender wedge of hope" that he might one day own a bit of ground, "for the luxury of having it, if not the profit of cultivating it." He dreamed after this manner of the house he would build:

## THE BALTIMORE TURNPIKE

It must be large and stately, simple in its form, without much ornament—in fact, expressive of strength and permanence. . . . The gate shall stay open, nailed open, if need be, like the hospitable doors of Tartary.

In the house of his dream, which still stands one mile from the center of Kennett Square, on the trolley line to West Chester, he entertained Whittier, Lanier, Stedman, Stoddard and many other literary celebrities. Here "The Story of Kennett" was written as well as a number of other volumes.

When he died in Berlin, where he was United States Minister to Germany, on December 19, 1878, the body was brought to a cemetery near Cedar-croft for burial. On the stone above his grave are carved these words from his own poem, "Deucalion":

For Life, whose source not here began,  
Must fill the utmost sphere of man,  
And, so expanding, lifted be  
Along the line of God's decree,  
To find in endless growth all good—  
In endless toil, beatitude.

## IV

### THE WEST CHESTER TURNPIKE

**O**NE of the advantages of the West Chester Road is that the electric car from 69th and Market Streets has a right of way on it to West Chester. One of the disadvantages is that it is far from an ideal road for the motorist. But there is so much of beauty and interest along the way that a rough road should not be allowed to be a hindrance.

At any rate the inconvenience caused to-day by the roughness of the road is nothing to the state of affairs described by one who has written of West Chester travel in pioneer days.

In those early staging times—especially when the frost was coming out of the ground—the road was often so miry and heavy, and the watering places always so numerous and attractive, that the drivers would take from breakfast time till candlelight in the evening to get from the city to our Borough (West Chester). On one of these irksome occasions, when Judge Darlington and Olof Stromburg were among the passengers, the Judge made the interjectional remark, "What a long road from Philadelphia to West Chester." Olof concurred in the opinion, but added, "It's a good thing for us that it is so." "Why so?" asked the Judge. "Because," replied Olof, "if it was not so long it would not reach."

It is no wonder the twenty-four miles to West Chester seemed long, for there were no towns to break

## THE WEST CHESTER TURNPIKE

the monotony of the way, and houses were scarce. As late as 1824 John Melish's *Traveler's Companion* noted as the only stations on the stage road Hamiltonville, Cobb's Creek, Darby Creek, and Chester Creek.

In early colonial days it was an event when such a thoroughfare as the West Chester Road was laid out. At first the grand jury was charged with the task of hearing petitions for new roads, viewing the proposed routes, and arranging for the construction. In 1692 a change was made, when the township through which the road passed was given complete control of it. Eight years later it was ordered that county roads should be in the hands of the county justices, while the governor and his council were expected to give grave attention to all problems connected with the king's highway.

As the population of the interior townships and counties grew, petitions for new roads multiplied, and, while many of these were not granted, so many roads were opened that Washington despaired when he saw how many avenues of approach to the city must be guarded if he would prevent supplies from reaching the British army in Philadelphia. However, he devised a most efficient means of intercepting food bound for the city, thus adding to the difficulties of the invaders.

It was not until April, 1793, that the legislature passed a bill directing that a State road be laid out from Philadelphia to York through West Chester. This road, known as the Strasburg Road, is a little north of the West Chester Turnpike. Seven years after the authorization of this road, a tri-weekly line of stages was arranged for. In 1809 a line of stages ran to Lan-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

caster from Philadelphia by way of "Strausberg and West Chester." The fare to Lancaster was \$3.50, while the fare to West Chester was \$1.25. To-day the fare by electric car is thirty cents. Fourteen pounds of baggage would be carried free for each passenger, though excess baggage was permitted. The provision was made that one hundred and fifty pounds of baggage should be paid for at the rate of a passenger's transportation.

In addition to the stages, Conestoga wagons, and private carriages, the West Chester Road saw many specimens of the lumbering cart, with solid wheels cut from symmetrical logs of proper size. Sometimes these wheels were built up by carpenters.

Some of these carts found their way with grain to the Millbourne Mill, founded in 1757 on Cobb's Creek, at what is now Sixty-third and Market Streets. The builder was the grandson of Samuel Sellers, who bought hundreds of acres from William Penn in 1690. At first the capacity of the mill was five barrels a day, but this was gradually increased until to-day the output is enormous.

For about one mile from Millbourne Mill the West Chester Road passes through lands that for nearly two centuries were in the possession of the Sellers family. Several of the farmhouses built by members of the family near the road may still be seen. Samuel Sellers had need for a house at an early day, for his marriage to Anna Gibbons was the first to be recorded in the minutes of the Darby Meeting.

Two of the oldest houses on the road, one of which



A FARM HOUSE ON MANOA ROAD



AN OLD HOUSE ON DARBY CREEK



**THE OCTAGONAL SCHOOL HOUSE, NEAR NEWTOWN SQUARE**



**THE DROVE TAVERN AT BROOMALL**

## THE WEST CHESTER TURNPIKE

is fast becoming a ruin, may be seen, soon after passing toll gate number two. A third old stone farmhouse may be seen by those who will leave the turnpike at Manoa Road, directly opposite the grounds of the Delaware County Country Club. A short distance down the road, and opposite the Babies' Hospital, this relic looks down on the passers-by as it has done for more than a century.

At the crossing of Darby Creek two buildings attract attention—one, a saw mill, built in 1837, and the other the residence of the proprietor of the saw mill, John E. Stanley. The newer portion of this house is venerable; the log portion is probably not far from two hundred years old.

Darby Creek looks so inviting at this point that it is not difficult to appreciate the enthusiasm of Harold Donaldson Eberlein who urges lovers of nature to try the sport he calls "Creek Following." He suggests that those who want a short walk full of surprises should follow Darby Creek from the West Chester Pike to Clifton on the Baltimore Pike. This is his argument:

You would see the country in a wholly new light and discover a hundred new aspects of familiar places that you have never dreamed of. You who would get sound outdoor pleasure from a neglected source and abundant healthful exercise withal, follow the windings of the creeks, and trace their courses afoot. It may sound like rank heresy in these days of automobiles to urge walking for pleasure, but if you would really know the country you live in you must condescend sometimes to use the means of locomotion

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Heaven gave you and tramp where neither auto nor horse can take you. . . . Stout shoes and old clothes are indispensable to the creek follower. . . . Nowhere is there a richer endowment of streams than in the country round about Philadelphia. All are exceeding fair, and many an almost unknown nook in our own neighborhood is just as rarely beautiful as divers of the far-famed spots in older lands that travelers fall into raptures over.

One of the results of such a ramble might be the discovery of some old mill or abandoned house whose solid walls will lend themselves admirably to reconstruction. Tales are told of wise people who, seeing the possibilities of such structures, have bought them for a song, and have made for themselves delightful summer homes or even more permanent habitations.

A mile and a half beyond Darby Creek, at Broomall, is a building that would lend itself admirably to such reconstruction. This was the Drove Tavern, for many years a popular wayside house for turnpike travelers. The date stone in the upper gable says the house was built by L. H. R. (Hugh and Rebecca Lounes) in 1796. The third figure is obscured, and there are residents of the village who insist that, by the use of opera glasses, they have made it 2 instead of 9. The probability is that they are wrong, though it is perhaps true that the lower portion of the house, built of logs, is much older than the more conservative reading of the date stone would indicate. The tavern had a license from 1800 to 1842. Here many thousands of hungry men found refreshment. Probably some of them would have appreciated the humor of the lines written by

## THE WEST CHESTER TURNPIKE

Alexander Wilson, the ornithologist, after stopping at an inn a few miles from Philadelphia:

Here two long rows of market folk were seen,  
Ranged front to front, the table placed between,  
Where trays of meat and bone and crusts of bread  
And hunks of bacon all around were spread;  
Or pints of beer from lip to lip went round,  
And scarce a bone the hungry house-dog found.  
Torrents of Dutch from every quarter came,  
Pigs, calves and sauer kraut the important theme,  
While we, our future plans revolving deep,  
Discharged our bill and straight retired to sleep.

Alexander Wilson would have enjoyed associating with a French traveler, Jean Pierre Brissot de Warville, who visited the United States in 1788, because he, too, saw the pleasing side of accommodations on the road in which many others saw nothing but what was vexatious. After one of his trips by stage, he wrote:

The carriage is a kind of open wagon, hung with double curtains of leather and wool, which you raise or let fall at pleasure; it is not well suspended. But the road was so fine, being sand and gravel, that we felt no inconvenience from that circumstance. The horses are good, and go with rapidity. These carriages have four benches, and may contain twelve persons. The light baggage is put under the bench, and the trunks fixed on behind.

Let the Frenchmen who have travelled in these carriages, compare them to those used in France; to those heavy diligences where eight or ten persons are stuffed in together; to those cabriolets in the environs of Paris, where two persons are closely confined, and deprived of air, by a dirty driver, who torments his

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

miserable jade: and those carriages have to run over the finest roads, and yet make but one league an hour. If the Americans had such roads, with what rapidity would they travel? since notwithstanding the inconvenience of the roads, they now run ninety-six miles in a day. Thus, with only a century and a half of existence, and opposed by a thousand obstacles, they are already superior to people who have been undisturbed in progress for fifteen centuries.

Brissot found it interesting to study his fellow passengers:

You find in these stages men of all professions. They succeed each other with rapidity. One who goes but twenty miles, yields his place to one who goes farther. The mother and daughter mount the stage to go ten miles to dine. Another stage brings them back. At every instant, thus, you are making new acquaintances. The frequency of these carriages, the possibility of finding place in them, and the low and fixed price, invite the American to travel.

Beyond Broomall, opposite the grounds of the Pennsylvania Hospital, is one of the most curious buildings in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, the old Octagon School. This was built in 1815 by the Friends of Newtown Meeting on the meeting house lot, and was opened as a subscription school. In 1836 a Friend provided in his will the annual payment of two hundred dollars for the support of the school. It is probably due to this fact that the building has been kept in repair while other school buildings of the period when the octagon plan was popular have fallen into decay.

Newtown Square, the cross-roads settlement a short

## THE WEST CHESTER TURNPIKE

distance beyond the Octagon School, for many years had a struggle with its rival, the old Square, at the intersection of the Newtown and Goshen roads, three-fourths of a mile to the north. When Thomas Holme made his map of 1681 he said that William Penn had planned a town at the crossroads which should be "the first inland town west of Philadelphia."

A house on the Goshen road was one of Washington's outposts during the British occupation of Philadelphia in 1777-1778, and the soldiers quartered there were charged with the duty of cutting off supplies of all kinds designed for the use of the army of occupation in the city.

The Castle Rocks are a natural feature of great beauty, two miles from Newtown Square. These are more than one hundred feet high, and are honeycombed with fissures and caverns. The beauty of the rocks has been somewhat marred by the efforts of a manufacturer to crush the rock for ballast, but fortunately he had to abandon the effort because of its extreme hardness.

The farm on which the rocks are located is noted because it was patented by William Penn to Samuel Bradshaw, in 1682, and because it was the scene of the capture, in 1778, of James Fitzpatrick, the outlaw, who terrorized the countryside for several years. The site of the house where he was captured is close to the house next beyond the Castle Rocks, on the right.

James Fitzpatrick, whom Bayard Taylor in "The Story of Kennett" called "Sandy Flash," and whom

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others have called the Rob Roy McGregor of Pennsylvania, was an Irish blacksmith who enlisted in the American Army, and deserted. When arrested by two soldiers, he asked them to go with him to his mother's house, that he might get some clothing. Entering the house in advance of them, he seized his rifle and drove his captors away. From that day he was an outlaw, and scores of travelers had cause to regret his escape from the soldiers. But he would not make war on women. One day, it is said, he met an old woman who was on her way to Philadelphia to purchase supplies. When she saw him his engaging manner made her confidential; she told him how she dreaded meeting Captain Fitz and being robbed of all she had. Thereupon he told her that he was the man she dreaded, but that she had no reason to fear, as he would scorn to rob a defenseless woman. Drawing from his pocket a well-filled purse, he handed it to her, and left her rejoicing.

Bayard Taylor told of a man who recognized the highwayman on a lonely road:

The victim uttered a cry and gave himself up for lost. This was the redoubtable highwayman—the terror of the country—who for two years had defied the law and all its ordinary and extraordinary agents, scouring the country at his will, between the Schuylkill and the Susquehanna, and always striking his blows where no one expected them to fall. This was he in all his dreadful presence, a match for twenty men, so the story went.

Again the novelist related an incident that is still described with bated breath by countrymen to whom

## THE WEST CHESTER TURNPIKE

it has been passed down by tradition. It is said that once he appeared at a tavern where a score of men, armed for the purpose of catching him, were gathered:

All eyes, turned toward the crossing of the roads, beheld, just rounding the corner house, fifty paces distant, a short, broad-shouldered determined figure, making directly for the tavern. His face was red and freckled, his thin lips half-parted with a grin which showed the flash of white teeth between them, and his eyes sparkled with the light of a cold, fierce courage. He had a double-barrelled musket on his shoulder, and there were four pistols on the tight leathern belt about his waist.

"Whoever puts finger to trigger, falls. Back, back, I say, and open the door for me!"

Still advancing as he spoke, and shifting his pistol so as to cover now one, now another of the group, he reached the tavern porch. Some one opened the door of the bar-room, which swung inwards. The highwayman strode directly to the bar, and then stood, facing the open door, while he cried to the trembling bar-keeper,—

"A glass o' rye, good and strong!"

It was set before him. Holding the musket in his arm, he took the glass, drank, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, and then, spinning a silver dollar into the air, said, as it rang upon the floor,—

"I stand treat to-day; let the rest o' the gentlemen drink at my expense!"

He then walked out, and slowly retreated backwards toward the corner-house, covering his retreat with the levelled pistol, and the flash of his dauntless eye.

Still another incident of the redoubtable adventurer is current:

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

In 1778 a blacksmith's apprentice near Newtown was starting fires in the morning. A young man rode up and asked to have a shoe put on his horse. The apprentice was persuaded to attempt the task. While preparing the hoof, the young man asked for an apron and proposed that the apprentice blow the bellows while he drove the nail. The boy objected, that the animal might be lamed. But the young man said he would take the risk. It was soon evident that he was master of the trade.

"You are well armed, sir. Are you in the army?" the boy asked.

"It is dangerous to travel this road alone," was the reply. "They tell me there is a Capt. Fritz or Fitch, who frequents this neighborhood, and the people are much afraid of him, I've heard."

"Many people are afraid of him," the apprentice said.

"Have you ever seen him?" came the question.

"No, but I have heard him described," was the reply.

"Do I answer the description?" the volunteer blacksmith asked.

Then he mounted, and said, "You have never seen Fitzpatrick. I'm going now, and I might just as well say to you that Fitzpatrick happens to be my name."

In Edgemont township, in which Castle Rocks are located, near Gradyville, is the striking house of John Yarnall, pioneer. This has been called the "trick house," for when it is approached from different directions it presents a decidedly altered appearance. This is due to the fact that one main wall and one gable are of stone, while the second main wall and the second gable are of brick.



**THE OLD PRESIDENT TAVERN, EDEGMONT**  
**Associated with "Sandy Flash," the Highwayman of 1778**



**15 MILES TO PHILADELPHIA**

The roots of the walnut tree have grown about the milestone



**THE JOHN YARNALL HOUSE, 1720, NEAR EDMONT**

Called "The Trick House" because front wall and east gable are of brick, while rear wall and west gable are of stone

## THE WEST CHESTER TURNPIKE

Like all the farmhouses of early days, the Yarnall house had its own outdoor bake-oven. These bake-ovens of the pioneers were described by a man whose boyhood was spent on just such a farm as that of John Yarnall:

They were from six to eight feet long by three to five feet wide, of an oval shape, in which a dozen large loaves of bread, forty or fifty pies, a little pig, a great roast or two turkeys and several chickens could be baked all at the same time. The preparation of oven wood was a serious matter to the farm hands, so much so that in the rustic parties and sham weddings with which the young people amused themselves, they required the suffering groom to promise that "he would be true and would be good, and keep his wife in oven wood."

One of the Yarnall family, Isaac, was complained of by Middletown Meeting, on "8, 27, 1753," for marriage to one who was not a member of meeting, and without his mother's consent. For this he was disowned.

By that time the upper part of what was then Chester County was getting so well settled that the farmers began to urge that the county seat, which had been at Chester since the days of William Penn, should be removed to a more convenient location. But agitation did not bear fruit until March 20, 1780, when Assembly passed an act authorizing the removal of the court house and jail from Chester to West Chester, a settlement then known as the Turk's Head, because of the tavern of this name (still standing) which was built in 1774. The enabling act named men who were to

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

carry out the wishes of Assembly, but evidently these men were more in favor of continuing the county seat at Chester or removing it to one of the other locations that had been setting up a claim for it. At any rate they had the temerity to ignore the commission. Accordingly, on March 22, 1784, a supplement to the original act authorized other men to undertake the work. They proceeded at once to erect a court-house and a jail near the Turk's Head.

In the mean time the citizens of Chester, alarmed lest that borough should lose its prestige when no longer the county seat, bestirred themselves, brought pressure to bear on the Assembly, and on March 30, 1785, an act was passed suspending the supplement to the original act.

In triumph a company of Chester sympathizers decided to go to the Turk's Head and demolish the new buildings. Word of their intention was received in West Chester in plenty of time to make preparation to give the visitors a warm welcome, if they should appear. But they did not appear. Conference between the parties, on neutral ground, resulted in a decision to await the further action of the Assembly. This action was taken on March 18, 1786, when the suspending act was repealed by a fourth act with the curious title:

An act to repeal an act intituled an act to suspend an act of the General Assembly of this Commonwealth, intituled an act," etc.

But the residents of the lower part of Chester County were not satisfied. Again they appealed to

## THE WEST CHESTER TURNPIKE

the Assembly, and on September 26, 1789, the county was divided, Delaware County was formed, and Chester was made the county seat. This distinction remained hers for more than sixty years, when Media took the prize from her.

The borough of West Chester dates from March 28, 1799. Its growth was slow but steady. The first great event to break the monotony of quiet development was the completion of the railroad to the borough in 1836. Carried away by their enthusiasm, the citizens planned to bring the railroad to the doors of as many as possible. An attempt was made to extend the track through the streets. But the plan did not work out well; "the project proved as abortive in its results as it was crude in its conception," a county historian says. The "appendage" was removed as a nuisance.

Those early enthusiasts were only a few decades ahead of time. If they could see to-day the trolley tracks in the streets of the borough, they would feel like saying, "We told you so!"

## V

### ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

**W**HEN the sturdy Swedish settlers who preceded the colonists of William Penn ventured into the interior from what is now Philadelphia, many of them followed the Kitanning Path, one of the best known of the trade routes out from the Delaware and the Schuylkill. At that time there was no ferry across the Schuylkill at the present Market Street. No ferry was provided until after the meeting of the first Assembly in 1682.

The keeper of the first ferry was not satisfactory to the early travelers. When some of them appealed to the Council, he was warned "to Expedite a sufficient ferry boat for horses and cattle to pass to and fro over the Schuylkill as also to make the way on both sides easy and passable both for horse and man to Loe water Mark; otherwise ye Council will make Care to dispose of it to such as will dispose of ye same."

Complaints continued until 1723, when the ferry privilege was leased to Aquila Rose for twenty-one years. He was required to get substantial boats and make good landings. In consideration of this investment, the promise was made that he should have a monopoly of ferry privileges for some distance up and down the river, and he was allowed to charge a reasonable toll. Foot passengers were taxed one penny, and

## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

a loaded cart or wagon had to pay one shilling. He went ahead with pleasing speed to mend the conditions of which complaint had been made, but only a little while after the ferry privilege became his he was drowned while at work. A rhymester of the day explained:

'Twas then that, wading through the chilling flood,  
A cold ill humor mingled with his blood.

The first petition for a bridge was presented to the Assembly in 1751, and Benjamin Franklin, Casper Wistar and Charles Norris were appointed to study the situation and report. In August, 1751, they reported in favor of a bridge "near to the end of the Market street where Captain Coultas keeps his ferry." But nothing further was heard of this proposition.

Three years later, when Thomas Pownall passed this way, he wrote of Coultas's Ferry:

The ferry-boats at Schuylkill . . . are the most convenient I ever saw; and the oars with which they are rowed over, rigged out in a manner the most handy that can be devised; they are fixed in an iron fork, so as to have a perpendicular motion, and they are loaded towards the hand, so as to be nearly ballanced, leaving, however, the feather of the oar rather the more heavy; this fork is fixed on a pivot, in the gunwale of the boat, by which the oar has free horizontal motion. By this simple contrivance of mechanism, a very slight boy can manage a pair of large heavy oars, and row over a large ferry boat.

It is recorded that in 1770 the entire income of the city of Philadelphia was but eight hundred pounds, and that two hundred pounds of the amount came

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from the Market Street ferry, which had been taken over by the city.

During the Revolutionary War several floating bridges were built at this point, but the first permanent bridge was built by a company incorporated in 1798. A prospectus set forth these things, among others:

The bridge is to consist of three large arches, of which the centre is to be two hundred and fifty feet long, and the other two to be each one hundred and fifty feet, besides these, there will be a second smaller arch at each end, to give greater ease for the passing of the waters during the freshes. The width of the bridge will be fifty feet, with footways on each side.

The bridge was of wood, on stone piers. The corner stone was laid October 18, 1800. 800,000 feet of lumber were used. The structure, 1300 feet long, was opened January 1, 1805. The cost was \$300,000, and the receipts the first year were \$13,600. This was the first covered bridge in America.

A marble obelisk with inscriptions was set up on the western approach. One inscription read:

No pier of regular masonry into as great a depth of water is known to exist in any other part of the world.

Tolls were abolished in 1840, when the city became owner of the bridge. Thirty-five years later the structure was burned. The temporary bridge that succeeded it for a time was completed in two hundred and seven working hours. The present bridge was not arranged for until 1881.

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The monument erected to commemorate the original bridge is still standing, having been removed to the eastern approach to the present bridge, beside the gas tank. The inscriptions can no longer be read, for the soft stone has worn away.

Improvements in the road that led from the bridge toward Lancaster kept pace with the changes in the method of crossing the Schuylkill. The beginnings of the first road date from 1687. As the years passed the road was extended and developed. In 1721, when it became necessary to organize Lancaster County, the residents asked for a foot road which they could use in taking their produce to Philadelphia. They argued that they had no navigable water, as the people in the Schuylkill valley had, and that the existing road was "incommodious." In 1741 the road asked for was opened.

As the country developed, and travel increased, it was evident that a better road was needed. In 1791, therefore, the Legislature authorized a company to construct a turnpike from Philadelphia to Lancaster, the first road of the kind in the country. Popular enthusiasm was so high that the stock offered was heavily oversubscribed, and it became necessary to choose the stockholders from among the applicants by lot. When thirty dollars only had been paid in on the shares, they were in great demand at par.

An interesting document sent to the stockholders when the road was still under construction has been preserved. Matthias Slough, the author of the document, was the superintendent of the fifth of the five

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

districts into which the road was divided. He declared that, as an honest man, and in accordance with his instructions, he had turned a deaf ear to the appeals of certain land owners who wished him to run the road crooked to suit their convenience; later they tried to impede him. This, he felt sure, was the explanation of the fact that the managers of the road later awarded to some one else the contract for a desirable section of the road, though his bid was two hundred pounds lower than that of the successful bidder. He explained that complaint had been made that he had not been able to show as good results as his neighbor, the superintendent of the fourth division. He owned that much more work had been done in this division than in his own, "but," he added, "that it is to be ascribed to the extraordinary exertion of the superintendent, I deny." The real reason, he said, was that the fourth district lay in a barren region. The farmers, having little work of their own to do, were glad to work on the road. Further, stone was plentiful in the fields by the roadside. In his own district the farmers were so busy in their fertile fields that he could not secure help, and stone could be secured only at a distance and with great labor. More, in the fourth district only the easiest of the work had been done, while in his district he had done all his work well, in spite of difficulties. To cap the climax, he declared that the work in the fourth district had cost much more than in the fifth district. "I can lay my hand on my heart, and declare that I, in no instance, wantonly sported with one shilling of the Company's money."

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Then he went on to say to "those who prostitute truth at the Shrine of Malevolence":

I should have treated all you said with the contempt it deserved; you have not confined your Mallice to yourselves, in propagating your infernal stories, but sent forth your sons and your daughters, your man servants and your maid servants, to calumniate and traduce my character abroad.

I deem it my duty to lay before you these facts, to show you the treatment a worthy citizen of Chester County received.

History is silent as to the result of this broadside, but it makes interesting reading, for it helps to show that human nature was the same a century ago as it is to-day.

The Lancaster Turnpike was completed in 1796. The first regular stage, carrying ten passengers, used the new road in May, 1797. It left Lancaster at five o'clock in the evening, and reached Philadelphia, sixty-six miles distant, at five o'clock next morning.

Francis Bailey, in his *Journal of a Tour in North America*, written in 1796, pronounced the road "a masterpiece of its kind." That the managers proposed to keep it in good condition is evident from this regulation:

Nor shall more than eight horses be attached to any carriage whatsoever used on said road, and if any wagon or other carriage shall be drawn along said road by a greater number of horses or with a greater weight (3 1-2 or 4 tons) than is hereby permitted, one of the horses attached shall be forfeited to the use of said company, to be seized or taken by any of the officers,

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

or servants, who shall have the privilege to choose, excepting the shaft or wheel horse or horses.

Another interesting document connected with the early history of the turnpike is the note book kept by one of the surveyors employed in 1806 to plan for the improvement of the road. On the right-hand pages of the note book the surveyor carefully drew the detail of the road on a scale of one-half mile to the inch, the left hand pages he used for all sorts of notes, curious and otherwise, for example, he quoted a rhyme that sad experience in the rough country may have made him appreciate —

On the 22d day of December  
A confounded big piece of timber  
Fell down slambang  
And Kill'd poor John Lamb.

A later note has to do with business:

Rising the Hill at the Commencement of the fifth mile at the beginning of David Evan's District the stones are very large and ought to be broken finer. This however is not the falt of the present Superintendant they appear to have been left so originally in making the road.

The following memorandum shows that the travelers of that day were just as averse to paying toll as the automobilist is to-day:

Mr. Daniel Maul is of opinion that a 2 1-2 mile Gate ought to be set just below where the Gulf Road falls into the T. road below the Buck in order to intercept the traveling which comes in along the 2d Gulf Road and the Old L. road, which now travels on the

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T. road about one mile and turns off to the old L. road again at Lenoff's Lane without paying any toll.

As is indicated by this memorandum, the turnpike did not always follow the course of the original Lancaster Road. At places a better route was found. Thus the Old Lancaster road diverges from the Lancaster Turnpike from Haverford College to a point beyond Wayne, is identified with it for a short space, then has a separate existence for a longer distance. The two roads finally come together beyond Berwyn.

The closing memorandum is a statement of account:

Took with me Nov. 3, 1806 Cash \$115 to bear the Expense of the P & Lancaster Turnpike Road.

Nov. 6 "Snack at Eagle"	.87
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Nov. 6 "rained"	5.63
-----------------	------

20 pd for 4 seats in the Lancaster stage	\$16.
--	-------

pd. James Dewey for 15 days assistance	15
--	----

Salmon Veats do	7
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16 Days Surveying	64
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The Old Lancaster Road was called the Conestoga Road because it was the favored route of the great Conestoga freighters. But long before the day of the Conestogas the road was a busy place. Hundreds and thousands of pack horses threaded their way along the narrow track, picturesque cavalcades whose advance was the signal for the gathering by the wayside of the scattered residents of the countryside who were hungry for the touch with the world which these messengers of commerce could give them. Frequently the drivers, welcoming an excuse for rest or delighted to be the

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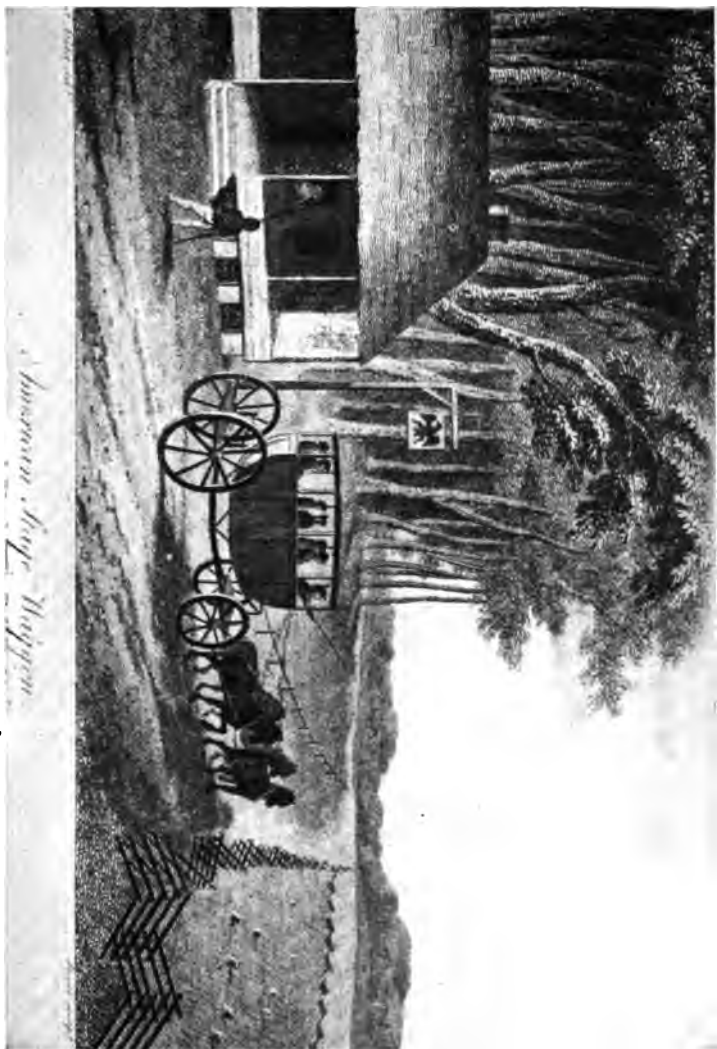
center of interest, would satisfy the curiosity of the settlers; sometimes, however, the sense of their own importance would make them keep on their way, heedless of all greetings and inquiries. Human nature as seen on the roads in those early days was not different from human nature today.

Ordinarily there were from twelve to sixteen horses in a pack train. In charge of each train were two men; one of these led the procession, picking out the road, while his companion brought up the rear. Bells formed a part of the equipment of each horse, though these were not for use by day so much as they were a convenience in locating animals that might stray from the camp.

Year by year the wagon roads grew longer and the pack-horse routes or bridle paths grew shorter. Each year the point at which the transfer from wagons to pack-animals had to be made was advanced. Lancaster was for a time the head of the wagon road. Later Carlisle was the transfer point. At length the day came when a wagon could go all the way through to Pittsburgh.

The pack-horse drivers did not welcome the advance of the roads; they did not see why they should be deprived of their occupation. Consequently, there was bad blood between the wagoners and the leaders of the passing industry, and clashes between them were frequent.

At first the great Conestoga wagons ran independently, but in time the industry was organized. Companies controlled much of the business. The Line Wagon Company was among the leaders. The experiment was tried of having drivers and horses in relays



SHOWING THE ORIGINAL "SPREAD EAGLE INN" NEAR THE FOURTEENTH  
MILESTONE, LANCASTER PIKE

From "Travels through the States of North America," by Isaac Weld, London, 1800



*American friends going to meeting in summer.*

From Robert Sutcliffe's Travels, York, England, 1811

## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

along the road, and of delivering wagons at stations precisely as a railway crew turns over a train to others at a division point. But this plan did not work well; it was found that the drivers thought more of making speed than of caring for their outfit. As a result there were many wrecked wagons by the roadside, and the profits of the company were impaired. Then it was decided to return to the old system of making each driver responsible for his own outfit along the entire distance.

For a generation following the Revolution the road was a busy place. Conestoga wagons, stages, pack horses, and private conveyances at times made an almost continuous procession. Johan Schoepf, writing in 1784, said that there were probably "seven or eight thousand Dutch Waggon's with four Horses each, that from Time to Time bring their Produce and Traffick to Philadelphia, from 10 to 100 miles distance." Sometimes there were as many as eight horses to a wagon. Each wagon had its feed trough suspended at the rear and the tar can swinging underneath. The procession on busy days must have been startling.

A hint of the amount of the traffic at this period was given by Sister Catherine Fritsch, who, in May, 1810, with half a dozen others, went from Bethlehem to Philadelphia, crossing over to the Lancaster Road at Downingtown. She spoke of ten wagons that stood at a wayside mill to be loaded with flour for the city. Another picture was drawn thus:

At the toll-gates their Keepers were usually busily engaged in taking the toll, for sometimes three or four

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

conveyances stood in waiting. Some of the gatekeepers kept tally on a slate of the money they took in.

Coming early to a toll-gate we had to wait until the sleepy Keeper, rubbing his eyes, came out for our toll. Generally, these gate-keepers were taciturn, sour-looking men. Indeed, they seemed to me to resemble each other so much that I almost believed them to be of one family—sons of one father.

At eight o'clock that morning she ordered breakfast, "but had to wait patiently for it as the passengers of the Post stage must first be served."

"The more one approaches to the city," she said, finally, "the greater the number of conveyances of all kinds, and consequently the deeper the dust, which covered us from head to foot and even filled our mouths. . . . We could not see objects twenty feet ahead of us."

The most important man on the road in the days of which Catherine Fritsch wrote was the driver of the stage coach. Next to him came the wagoner. Least important of all was the driver of a private conveyance, as the following incident shows:

Once a wedding party in two-wheeled gigs was on the way to Philadelphia. One gentleman groom drove against the leaders of one of the numerous wagoners passing in the same direction. At the next turn the driver called on the gentleman for redress. It took some diplomacy to arrange the matter.

When travel was at its height, the returns on the stock of the turnpike company were large. Frequently the net annual earnings were more than fifteen per cent. But after about 1820 the profits became less.

Many travelers have left humorous and illuminat-

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ing narratives of their experiences when the Lancaster road was in its glory.

In 1778 Elizabeth Drinker went from Philadelphia to Lancaster. Of one day's experience she wrote in her diary:

In our journey to-day we found the roads so bad, that we walked part of ye way, and climbed 3 fences, to get clear of ye mud.

On April 9 she wrote:

This day we forded three large rivers, the Conestoga ye last, which came into ye carriage, and wet our Feet, and frightened more than one of us.

In an old diary, some one whose name is not known, in telling of "a trip for pleasure," wrote:

Left Lancaster . . . in good spirits, but alas, a sad accident had like to have turned our mirth into mourning, for W. driving careless and Being happily engaged with the lady he had the pleasure of riding with, and not mindful enough of his charge, drove against a large stump which stood in the way, by which the chair was overturned and the lady thrown out to a considerable distance, but happily received no hurt. About 8 o'clock arrived at Douglass' where supped and rested all night. The supper was pretty tolerable, beds indifferent, being short of sheets for the beds, the woman was good enough to let W. have a table-cloth in lieu of one.

In 1789 a family party took passage on a stage of a later line, hoping for a speedy journey from Philadelphia to Lancaster. Soon they overtook a husband and wife who had been traveling in a chair until the driver refused to take them further. Room was made

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

for the wife in the stage; the husband walked alongside. The further incidents of the journey were related by one of the party in a letter to friends. The road was so rough, and the load was so heavy, that the axle soon cracked, and the stage dropped to the road. Fortunately nobody was injured, so the party extricated themselves and "footed it Indian fashion to the nearest inn," two miles distant. After eating dinner they persuaded a countryman to take them on the next stage of the journey. "His team proved to be a country wagon without springs or cover, with no seats other than bundles of rye straw." However, all agreed that the wagon was better than walking. Finally, after twelve weary hours, the party succeeded in reaching Downings.

William Hamilton of Woodlands, who made frequent journeys to Lancaster to look after his large interests there, wrote to a friend, on September 1, 1790, an account of a distressing accident:

Having been so unfortunate in returning from Mr. Ross's as to upset my sulky. As one of the wheels struck a stone 2 feet high when I was driving at the rate of 7 miles an Hour you will not wonder that the shock was violent. Although I have to thank Heaven that I have no broken limb I am fearful of having for a long time to complain of a very severe sprained ankle. The agony I experienced for the first 20 minutes was so extreme that I had no doubt of the leg being shattered to pieces. What added to my misery was that I was quite alone without the possibility of extricating myself until the chariot came up which was about a mile behind. The mare stopp'd (after dragging the sulky between 20 & 30 feet) as if she was

## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

shot and to this I attribute my salvation, entangled and helpless as I was.

While in Lancaster on another occasion Mr. Hamilton wrote to his secretary in Philadelphia that he must give no hint of the time the writer planned to return home, for the following reason:

From the number of people with whom I have had to do Business an idea has been falsely taken up of my having rec'd an immensity & some rascals or other may think me worth a speculation on the road. It will therefore be no more than prudent to be on my guard the more especially as within three days a gang of villanns have arrived in this town.

In 1805 Robert Sutcliffe saw something that, even on this road of unusual sights, appealed to him so much that he wrote:

At General Paoli Tavern, met a family who had now landed a few days before in Philadelphia, and were on their way to the Ohio. . . . The men wore a plain jacket and trowsers, with very large shallow crowned hats, and the women had their hair plaited in long braids, which hung down their back, with jackets and petticoats just the reverse of the fashion of the present day. Altogether they had the appearance of a stout, hardy race, and in the company, I understood there were four generations. The master of the inn informed me that he had every reason to believe they had a very large property with them, in the waggon in which they traveled.

For the accommodation of the constant travel on the road there were sixty-one taverns in sixty-six miles. Many of these were kept by men of standing, frequently by members of Congress or of the state legis-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

lature. After his journey to America the Count de Segur spoke of this fact:

At first I was surprised, on entering a tavern, to find it kept by a Captain, a Major, or a Colonel, who was equally ready to talk, and to talk well, about his campaigns, his farming operations, or the Market he had for his produce.

Mrs. Mary De Wees, who left Philadelphia for Kentucky on September 27, 1787, told in her journal of the frequent stops at convenient inns. One night she slept at the Sign of the Lamb, she breakfasted at Colonel Webster's, and took supper and slept at the United States. Next day she went on to the Waggon, and then to the Compass. Next came the Hat. If she had chosen, she might have stopped at the Buck, the Red Lion, the Steamboat, the Rising Sun, the Spread Eagle, the Ship, the Swan, the Sheaf, the Cross Keys, the Rainbow, or the White Horse.

Most of these taverns entertained the weary traveler well, but sometimes the wayfarer was compelled to stop at a place where nothing was pleasant. Thomas Ashe, an Englishman, in his "Travels in America," told of one such experience:

It was a miserable log house, filled with emigrants who were in their passage to the Ohio, and a more painful picture of human calamity was seldom beheld: old men embarking in distant, arduous undertakings, which they could never live to see realized; their children going to a climate destructive to youth; and the wives and mothers partaking of all their sufferings, to become victims in their turn to the general calamity. The scene held out no very strong temptation to me

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for passing the night there, but there was no alternative; for my horse was tired, the wolves were out, and the roads impassable in the dark; the fire-side too, and all the seats were occupied, and the landlord was drunk. I was too much engrossed however with the distress around me, sensibly to feel my own. . . .

It is of little consequence where a traveler sleeps, when and what he eats, and whether he is comfortable, &c. In travelling along this, and every other road in America a stranger is furnished with a route indicating the best inns and their distance from each other; as to the expense, it seldom varies, being a quarter of a dollar for lodging, the same sum for every meal, and half a dollar a night for a horse.

A traveler of 1795 was not quite so philosophical in the presence of what was not pleasing:

The taverns are very indifferent. If the traveler can procure a few eggs with a little bacon, he ought to rest satisfied; it is twenty to one that a bit of fresh meat is to be had, or any salted meat except pork.

Vegetables seem also to be very scarce, and when you do get any, they generally consist of turnips or turnip top boiled by way of greens. The bread is heavy and sour, though they have as fine flour as any in the world; this is owing to the method of making it; they raise it with what they call "rots," hops and water boiled together. The traveler on his arrival is shown into a room which is common to every person in the house, and which is generally the one set apart for breakfast, dinner and supper. All the strangers that happen to be in the house sit down at these meals promiscuously, and the family of the house also form a part of the company. It is seldom that a single bedroom can be procured.

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In 1810 Margaret Dwight, niece of Timothy Dwight, the President of Yale College, told of the accommodations found at the end of a hard day. Her party came to a house which had been a tavern. They were told of a log hut across the road, built for "movers" like themselves, "that the landlord need not be bothered with them." He had made plenty of money, and he had taken down his sign. They wished to go in search of better accommodations, but, as their horses were tired, they decided to make the best of the hut.

In her journal Miss Dwight told further facts:

We have a good fire, a long dirty table, a few boards nailed up for a closet, a dozen long boards on one side and as many barrels in the other, two benches to sit on, two bottomless chairs, and a floor containing dirt enough to plant potatoes.

The building of the railroad from Philadelphia to Columbia was the beginning of the end of the rushing business done by the turnpike, though when the railroad company was chartered, an innkeeper on the turnpike said Philadelphia would be ruined, for "no railroad can carry the freight that the old Conestogas do." Just at first it seemed that the prophecy would come true. The railroad was crooked, and it was operated by horse power for some time. When locomotives were first talked of, there was great opposition on the part of those who used the turnpike or lived near it. They declared that the engines would destroy the value of their horses, and that sparks from them would set fire to their houses and barns. It was not until April, 1834, that the first train was drawn

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from Philadelphia to Lancaster by a locomotive, the Black Hawk. The time required was eight hours and a half. Not until 1836 did locomotives finally displace horsepower. Then the decline of turnpike traffic was rapid.

The modern traveler who goes over the route of the old Columbia Railroad, or its successor, the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the Lancaster Turnpike is interested at once in the Welsh names that meet him on every hand—Merion, Narberth, Wynnewood, Bryn Mawr, etc. The early settlers here were Welsh Quakers who came in response to William Penn's invitation and began to carve out homes in the wilderness.

One of these early settlers wrote of his experiences:

By the providence of God the year 1683 I transported myself with many of my friends to Pennsylvania where I and they arrived, the 16th day of the 9th month 1683, being then thirty-five years old; and settled myself in the place which afterwards I called Pencoid in the township of Merion, which was afterward called so by them, being the first settlers in it, having brought with me one servant from my native land, and fixed my settling here. I took to wife Gaynor Roberts.

William Penn was a frequent visitor in the homes of these early Welsh settlers. An incident of one of his visits was described by Sutcliffe in 1804. Sutcliffe was at the home of a friend in Merion, whose sister told him that on William Penn's arrival in America he lodged at her great-grandfather's in Merion. At that time her grandfather was a boy of about twelve years old; and being a lad of some curiosity, and not

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

often seeing such a guest as William Penn, he privately crept to the chamber door, up a flight of steps, in the outside of the building, which was only a log-house. On peeping through the latchet-hole, he was struck with awe, on beholding the great man upon his knees, by the bed-side; and could distinctly hear him in prayer, and in thanksgiving, that he was thus provided for in the wilderness.

The oldest portion of a house that is still standing within two miles of Merion Station may have been in existence at the time when Penn made this prayer of thanksgiving. This is Pont Reading House, a short distance from the Lancaster Road, on Haverford Road, at Ardmore Junction. This house, which is owned by the Humphrey family, is in three parts. The front section was built in 1813, the middle section dates from 1760, and the rear section is of unknown date. One of the log walls of this section may be seen by those who enter a door on the west side of the house. Much of the original furniture is still in place. The interior woodwork, of curly maple, was made from trees that grew on the estate. Judging from the trees still standing, there must have been a noble forest there when the builder of Pont Reading decided on the site.

From Pont Reading house it is not far down the Haverford Road to Haverford Meeting, which dates from 1700. Distinctive features of the stone building are the smoke holes, one in the north wall and one in the south wall. In early days, in winter, it was the custom to kindle a fire outside the building. Flues



PONT READING HOUSE, ARDMORE JUNCTION



SMOKE HOLE IN WALL OF HAVERFORD MEETING HOUSE, 1700  
The oldest church building in Delaware County



**THE BUCK TAVERN, HAVERFORD**



**RADNOR MEETING HOUSE, 1718**

## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

led up through the wall, to the smoke holes. A large pipe set into the wall radiated the heat into the building. This was quite an ingenious arrangement in the days when most churches had no provision for heating other than the footstoves brought from home by individual worshippers. That such primitive heating appliances were not always safe is indicated by an extract from Poulson's *American Advertiser* of Feb. 12, 1816:

A stage between this city and Trenton took fire and was entirely consumed. It was occasioned by a passenger setting a hot brick on the floor of the stage to keep his feet warm, and, what is most extraordinary, it burnt with such rapidity that the passengers, six in number, with difficulty made their escape.

Robert Sutcliffe attended Haverford Meeting one Sunday in 1804, when he was in Philadelphia. He says in the story of his travels:

This is one of the oldest meeting-houses in America; and at the early settlement of this meeting, friends of Philadelphia went every first day to attend it; most of them coming on foot a distance of about ten miles. At that time nearly the whole of the road was through a shady forest. Amongst the rest, Wm. Penn used to come on horseback, and would occasionally take up a little bare-footed girl behind him, to relieve her when tired. By the early minutes of the monthly meeting, it appeared that several friends were appointed to mark out a road through the woods from Philadelphia, to Haverford and Radnor meetings.

From Haverford Meeting to Haverford College the distance is short. The Lancaster Road is directly in front of the college grounds. A short distance farther

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

on, beyond the eighth milestone, is the old Buck Tavern, built in 1735, remodeled in 1780. It is now owned by D. C. Martin whose grandfather bought the property in 1844. From that time it has not been a licensed house, and it is now a private residence.

When Washington crossed the Schuylkill in September, 1777, a portion of his army encamped near the General Wayne, at the twenty-second milestone. The main portion, with Washington, camped at the Buck. Still another portion camped at the Plough Tavern about eleven miles west of the Schuylkill. The parts of the army combined on September 15, and marched up the road, camping at night near the White Horse, above Paoli.

Before this march was begun Washington wrote a letter to the President of Congress, dated "Buck Tavern, Lancaster Road, September 15, 1777, 3 p. m." The letter, one of the most revealing communications addressed by Washington to Congress, is reproduced here from a transcript made from the original on file in Washington:

Your favor of yesterday, with its several enclosures, came to hand last night. Though I would willingly pay every attention to the resolution of Congress, yet, the late instance respecting the recall of General Sullivan, I must beg leave to defer giving any order about it, till I hear further from that honorable body.

Our situation at this time is critical and delicate, and nothing should be done to add to its embarrassment.

We are now most probably on the point of another battle, and to derange the army by withdrawing so

## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

many general officers from it, may and must be attended with many disagreeable if not ruinous consequences. Such a proceeding, at another time, might not produce any bad effect, but how can the army be possibly conducted with a prospect of success, if the general officers are taken off in the moment of battle?

Congress may rely upon it, such a measure will not promote but injure the service. It is not my wish to prevent or delay a proper inquiry into General Sullivan's conduct a single instant, when the circumstances of the army will admit, but now they prohibit it, and, I think, this suspense in his command also. The recall of General St. Clair obliged me to part with General Lincoln, whom I could but ill spare; so the whole charge of his division is now upon Gen'l Wagner, there being no other Brigadier in it but himself. . . .

The main body of the British, from the best intelligence I have been able to get, lies near Dillworthtown, not far from the field of action, where they have been busily employed in burying their dead, which, from all accounts, amounted to a considerable number.

We are moving up this road to get between the British and Swede Ford, and to prevent them from turning our right flank, by crossing the Schuylkill river, which they seem to have a violent inclination to effect, by all their movements. I would beg leave to recommend in the most earnest manner, that some board or committee be appointed, or some mode adopted, for obtaining supplies of blankets for the troops. Many are now without them, and the season being cold, they will be injured in their health, and unfitted for service, unless they are immediately provided with them.

Our supplies in this instance, as well as in any article of clothing, cannot be too great, as there are frequent losses not easily to be avoided.

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

I would also observe, that I think, in point of prudence and sound policy, every species of provisions should be removed from the city, except such as will be necessary to supply the present demands of the army. I have been told there are considerable quantities in private hands, which should not be suffered to remain longer till they can be conveyed away.

Several miles farther along the Old Lancaster Road, near the corner of Ithan Road, is another inn of the early days where Washington stopped more than once. This is the Sorrel Horse, now occupied as a residence by George H. McFadden. On the bridge over a small stream east of the house is a tablet bearing this message:

During the encampment at Valley Forge in the darkest days of the revolution, the near-by stone dwelling, then the Sorrel Horse Inn, with warm and patriotic welcome sheltered often as its guests Washington and Lafayette.

The name of this tavern was frequently spoken in a toast that was popular with the traveler in the days of the Conestoga wagon:

Here is to the Sorrel Horse that Kicked the Unicorn that Made the Eagle fly; that Scared the Lambs from under the Stage, for drinking the Spring-house dry; that drove the Blue Bell into the Black Bear, and chased General Jackson all the way to Paoli.

The ten taverns listed in the toast were passed in the order named by the wagoners bound west.

In 1787 William Hamilton wrote from the Sorrel Horse:



THE SORREL HOUSE TAVERN, ITHACA ROAD  
Now the residence of Mr. George H. McFadden



## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

In all the times and seasons I have travelled this Road I never found it so bad as at present. From Jesse George's Hill to this place I could not once get into a trot, but could not compare it to anything but being chin deep in Hasty pudding & obliged to trudge thro it. The Hills its true are not so slushy but are worn into lopsided ruts so as to be scarcely passable.

Beyond the Sorrel Horse, is Radnor Meeting, whose date stone shows that the oldest portion of the building was erected in 1718. The great sycamore tree, by the side of the horse sheds, perhaps twenty feet in circumference, is a landmark to be remembered.

A traveler has told of the large crowds that attended these meetings in the early days:

On coming out of the house after the breaking up of the meeting, I was surprised at the great number of horses and carriages standing on the ground before the meeting-house. The space they occupied consisted of several acres, and from the best judgment I was able to pass, there were nearly 200 carriages of different descriptions, mostly on springs and more than double that number of horses, exclusive of those used in the carriages. The trifling expense at which horses and carriages are kept in the country parts of America, enables even those in slender circumstances to keep them.

Beyond Ithan Station the Old Lancaster Road crosses Church Road, which leads to St. David's church, built in 1715, perhaps the most famous of all the old churches, in the vicinity of Philadelphia. This building was long a mere shell. The people in the pews could look up to the bare rafters which bore the marks of the woodsman's ax. For fifty years there were no

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

floors; men and women were glad to stand on the bare ground.

Of this church Longfellow wrote:

What an image of peace and rest  
Is the little church among its graves!  
All is so quiet; the troubled breast,  
The wounded spirit, the heart oppressed,  
Here may find the repose it craves.

See, how the ivy climbs and expands  
Over this humble hermitage,  
And seems to caress with its little hands  
The rough, gray stones, as a child that stands,  
Caressing the wrinkled cheeks of age.

Cross the threshold; and dim and small  
Is the space that serves for the Shepherd's Fold;  
The narrow aisle, the bare, white wall,  
The pews, and the pulpit quaint and tall,  
Whisper and say, "Alas, we are old!"

One of the early pastors of St. David's was Griffith Hughes. On September 10, 1735, he wrote for permission to go to England to reprint Welsh books for his countrymen in America. In this letter he spoke of his need of a change, and the reason:

Lately on my way to perquihoma Church I had the misfortune to break my kneepan, which continues tho upon the mending very weak so that it is impossible, for me in my present Condition to serve the Church in a Regular order the present writing that and severall other hardshipps which I have with pleasure almost endured on my several Journeys to preach among the Back Inhabitants hath very much Impaired my health being often obliged in the day to want the



**THE OLD EAGLE SCHOOL AT STRAFFORD**



**ST. DAVID'S CHURCH, RADNOR, 1715**



**WAYNESBOROUGH, NEAR PAOLI, 1721**  
The birthplace of General Anthony Wayne



**WAYNESBOROUGH, REAR VIEW**

## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

Common necessities of life, and in the night to be Contented the shade of a Large tree for a Lodging. As for my Congregation at Radnor it is in a very flourishing Condition.

A short distance from St. David's Church is Strafford, where the Valley Road, which dates from 1705, touches the turnpike. Beyond the railway station, on this road, is the Eagle School which MacMasters says was, at the time of the erection of the building, in 1788, one of the very few rural schools in the United States. Here, in 1794, Andrew Garden, who had been a fifer in the Revolutionary War, was teacher. Evidently an earlier building was used for eighteen years, since the school was established in 1767. The building now on the ground was used for school purposes until 1872. The property was neglected until 1895, when residents of Strafford went into court and asked for the appointment of trustees to administer the property in accordance with the terms of the original gift. There were no documents to establish the trust, but the Court decided, on purely traditionary evidence, that the property should be administered forever for the public benefit. It has been said that this is the only instance in the United States where the character of such a public trust was successfully established on such evidence.

The trustees appointed by the court removed the plaster from the walls, repointed the stone, added the colonial entrance, restored the burial ground, erected a monument to Revolutionary soldiers ("Not famous but faithful") brought about the removal to the pres-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

ent route, of the road which bisected the property, and opened the building as a public library and reading room, and for small religious and educational gatherings.

There was at one time an old church on the property, but the burying ground, in which the oldest stone is dated 1777, is the sole reminder of this use of the hillside.

One of the most curious inscriptions reads:

In Memor of  
Rosannah Akins  
wif of James Akins

was Born January the  
17th 1757 and Departed  
This Life July The 10th  
1818 Aged 61 years  
5 months.

i choose they path of  
Heavenly Truth and  
Gloryed in my choice Not  
All they pleasures of the  
Earth Could make me so  
Rejoice  
And Seetly Tastes Unmeingled  
Love and Joy without a  
Tear a Bove.

On a neighboring stone is a rebuke of such weird poetry:

In Memory of Margaret  
Workizer, Consort of Christian  
Workizer, who departed this  
life February the 4th 1805 in  
the 55th year of her age.

## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

Verses on tombstones  
are but idly spent  
The living character  
is the monument.

Not far from Strafford, along the Sugartown Road, is Waynesborough, the birthplace of General Anthony Wayne, Revolutionary hero. The main part of this mansion stands practically unchanged, even to the curiously crooked hood above the entrance door. The owner of the property, W. M. Wayne, naturally does not look with favor on proposals to change this historic feature of the house.

Captain Wayne, grandfather of "Mad Anthony," came to America in 1722 and built Waynesborough in 1724. His son, who was a member of the Provincial Assembly, enlarged the house in 1765. A wing was added in 1812.

In the room to the right of the entrance hall General Wayne spent much of his time. Nothing here has been disturbed. The old high-backed horse-hair furniture, the ancient fireplace, the spindle-legged table, the faded carpet, are exactly the same as when General Wayne last saw them, and as they were seen by General Lafayette when he visited America in 1824. Above the mantel is a portrait of the General by a French artist, and above this are the General's pistols.

One of the finest box bushes in the country is on the grounds. One story is that "Mad Anthony" hid here when British soldiers searched the house for him; another version is that the soldiers penetrated the

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

bush with their bayonets, fearing that he might be lurking there.

Fixed to the front wall of the house is a tablet which reads:

The Home of General Anthony Wayne.  
Born in this House, January 1, 1745.  
Died at Erie, Pennsylvania, December 15, 1796.  
A Leader of the American Revolution in  
Pennsylvania and a soldier distinguished  
for his  
Services at Brandywine, Germantown,  
Valley Forge,  
Monmouth, Stony Point, and Yorktown.  
Subdued the Indians of Ohio, 1794.  
Commander-in-Chief of the  
United States Army 1792-1796.

Marked by the Chester County Historical  
Society.

On the occasion of the unveiling of this tablet ex-Governor Samuel W. Pennypacker paid the following tribute to the hero:

General Wayne was, without a doubt, one of the greatest generals and soldiers ever produced by this country. He early saw the futility of fighting the Britons, with their superior numbers and equipment, in the open. Strategy was the keynote to the success of Mad Anthony. He took advantage of the natural conditions afforded by the country in which he was fighting. Midnight attacks, ambuscades and the cutting off of detached parties of the enemy were methods favored by him.

These methods were successful, and the efforts of Mad Anthony and his men did much toward securing the freedom of this country. The very daring of some

## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

of the attacks made by this man and his small group of untrained soldiers was their best defense. The enemy was invariably surprised and unable to offer a successful resistance. These acts gained for him the sobriquet of Mad Anthony Wayne, a name to inspire fear in the hearts of the invaders. His patriotism and devotion to duty are fit models for any American to shape his life after.

Two miles from the home of the Revolutionary hero is the scene of one of the greatest disasters suffered by him. On the night of September 20, 1777, at a point half a mile southwest of Malvern, the British surprised the forces under General Wayne. It is said that somehow they learned the American watchword, "Here we are, and there they go." The exhausted soldiers were roused by the cry, "Up, run, the British are on you." Eighty Americans were killed. The battle has been called the Paoli Massacre because, it was said, the wounded and the sick were killed, and because soldiers were bayoneted after they had ceased to resist. There were those who said that General Wayne might have prevented the disaster by prompt action. Accordingly he asked for an official inquiry. A courtmartial held after the Battle of Germantown, acquitted him "with the highest honor."

The site of the Paoli Massacre, as it has always been known, was marked by a pile of stones until 1817. The monument built then was almost destroyed by relic hunters, and on the centennial anniversary of the disaster the present monument was dedicated. This may be reached from Waynesborough, or, if preferred, from Malvern by going out Monument Avenue.

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

General Wayne is buried in St. David's churchyard, where a monument stands above his grave.

Malvern is at the summit of the grade from Philadelphia, the roadbed of the Pennsylvania Railroad at this point being five hundred and forty-five feet above sea level. For many miles along the turnpike the view across the Chester Valley is wonderfully beautiful.

Near the twentieth milestone, at the foot of Valley Hill, where the turnpike makes a turn to the right, is the General Wayne Tavern, long one of the chief houses of entertainment along the road. Here many famous travelers stopped over night. One of these was Thomas Pownall, who wrote in 1759:

This is a narrow valley, but a most pleasing landscape; a little brook runs through it, which falls into the Schuylkill at Swedes-ford. The valley, fully settled and cultivated, every farmer has a lime-kiln for manure, or dressing to his land; they raise chiefly wheat—The farm houses all with sash-windows, and busked up on each side with peach and apple orchards, and surrounded on all sides with everything that looks like a man's own business being done here. The farms are such as yeomanry, not tenants, dwell in.

The tavern was first opened in a more primitive building before 1745. The present building was erected after the Revolution, and was rebuilt after a fire in 1831. Originally it was called the Admiral Vernon. The name was soon changed to the Admiral Warren, but after the Revolution the name was changed a second time, this time to General Warren, in honor of an American hero, instead of a British seaman. The property came into the hands of Hon. John Penn,

## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

of Philadelphia, in 1776, after the death of a landlord who directed in his will that "my messuage and tenement, commonly Called by the name of Warren Tavern," should be sold for the payment of his debts.

During the Revolutionary War the property was leased to Peter Mather, a Tory. It was said that the Warren was the meeting place for Tories, that British spies were received here, and that information as to the movements of the Continental Army was sent to the British. Major André, while a paroled prisoner from Lancaster, visited the inn and made a map of the country. It is said that he suggested the capture of Philadelphia by way of the Great Valley, the plan adopted by Howe and Cornwallis in 1777. On the night of September 20 Major André was with the party that came down the Swedesford road, stopped at the Warren, and then moved on to attack Wayne's men at Paoli.

After the action the landlord, Mather, was charged with having led the British to Paoli, but this he denied. That the people of the neighborhood did not believe him, however, was shown by their later avoidance of the tavern and its proprietor. From that day he did not prosper. "God frowned on him," was the popular explanation. From innkeeper he became a drayman. In later years he made his living by pushing a handcart. When the boys saw him on the street they were accustomed to jeer at him. "Here we are and there they go!" and "Remember Paoli!" they would cry.

When the removal of the county seat of Chester

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County from Chester was under discussion, there was an effort to make the Warren Tavern the new county-seat, but the bad name of the property because of Mather's Tory acts, and reluctance to allow any of the Penn family to secure a fresh hold in public life, defeated the project.

In 1786 there appeared at the Warren a dusty traveler who wore a long coat of homespun, secured by hooks and eyes, a broad brimmed hat, cowhide boots, and baggy trousers, which attracted attention because most people wore knee breeches. Mather would not admit him; he took him for a beggar. But the man walked on to Philadelphia, saw John Penn, bought the inn and three hundred and thirty-seven acres of land for two thousand pounds, then returned to the Warren with a bill of sale in his saddlebags. This time he was admitted.

Under the new proprietor, Gideon Fahnestock of Ephrata, the prosperity of the tavern was renewed, for it became the resort of all Germans who passed that way. The wagoners called the house "the Dutch tavern." They liked the fare provided there, but they did not like the principles of the proprietor, who refused to sell liquor on the Sabbath, the seventh day. They liked still less the stand taken by Gideon's son and successor, who changed the name to Warren Temperance Hotel, and on Sunday reversed his sign so that the message might be read, "Nothing Sold on the Sabbath." This early advocate of temperance was a member of the Great Valley Presbyterian church, located on the turnpike some distance from the tavern,



THE EAST CALN MEETING HOUSE, NEAR EAST DOWNINGTOWN



THE GENERAL WARREN TAVERN, NEAR THE TWENTIETH MILESTONE



**A RESIDENCE IN EAST DOWNTOWN**



**THE OLDEST HOUSE IN EAST DOWNTOWN**

## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

which was built on ground given by the father of Caleb Parry, landlord of the Warren in 1767.

Five miles beyond the Warren are three old inns, within a mile, the Sheaf of Wheat, the Ship Tavern, and the Exton. The original Ship was one mile west of Downingtown, but when the turnpike was built the present house was erected, and the old signboard, which pictured a ship under full sail, was transferred to the new location. This signboard was marked by many bullets, fired by those who did not like the Tory sentiments of the proprietor of the old Ship. The house is now a private residence.

The twenty-fifth milestone is set against the wall by the barn beyond the Ship. This is one of the stones found and relocated in 1907 by the Colonial Dames. The work was done under the direction of Miss Susan Carpenter Frazer of Lancaster. She adopted an ingenious method of search and determining the proper distance between stones. She would tie a white streamer to the tread and one spoke of a wheel, and then count four hundred and seventy revolutions. Sometimes a milestone was found at the place indicated by the completed revolutions. Sometimes on digging by the roadside, Miss Frazer uncovered a stone. One stone was found six hundred yards from the proper place, leaning against a barn. Another was discovered in use as a doorstep of a house by the roadside.

East Caln Meeting is in the edge of Downingtown. The old Downing's Tavern, which gave the name to the town, is at the junction of the Lionville Road, while

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

the Swan Tavern, another historic house, is in the business center of East Downingtown. A few rods farther on, is an ancient log cabin, thought to be the oldest relic in the neighborhood.

Beyond Downingtown, near the fortieth milestone, James Annesley, the hero of Charles Reade's novel, "The Wandering Heir," had many of his startling adventures. Annesley, who was heir to the estate and title of Lord Altham in Ireland, was by his uncle spirited away from that country when thirteen years of age, and sent to America. He landed in Philadelphia in 1728 and was sold as a "redemptioner" to a farmer. He ran away from his Master, was captured, imprisoned and returned to servitude. After he had served twelve years, two Irishmen, traveling along the Lancaster road, stopped at the house where the missing heir was in service. In conversation with the young man they learned that he came from Dumain, County Wexford, Ireland, their own town, and they were convinced that he was the son and heir of Lord Altham. When he had been taken back to England they testified at the trial of the celebrated case of the claimant, and had the gratification of seeing him properly recognized.

This section of the road in later days saw many other men, as well as women and children, who were escaping from servitude, for this entire region, from West Chester to Downingtown and on to Lancaster, was a part of the route of the Underground Railway. Along the road were stations where the fugitives were hidden and from which they were passed on to the

## ON THE LANCASTER TURNPIKE

next station. At Bird-in-hand, a station was kept by David Gibbons. Historians of the Underground Railway say that, of the twelve hundred or more slaves assisted by him from 1797 to 1853, but one or two were taken from his house.

One day a man came to the farm, saying that he wanted to buy a horse. But Mr. Gibbons was suspicious, for he saw him eying a negro who was working about the place. Immediately after the man departed the negro was sent away. Next day came a constable from Lancaster in search of the slave, but he was compelled to return without his prey.

At another time slave hunters came in search of a slave who was in the house at the time. Mr. Gibbons detained them by talking and asking questions. Mrs. Gibbons took the fugitive out the back door and hid her under an inverted rain hogshead. Then Mr. Gibbons politely showed the searchers through the house. When they left they were satisfied that the negro was not there.

Eight miles beyond Bird-in-hand is Lancaster, which became the capital of Pennsylvania in 1799. At that time the town was the largest inland settlement in the United States. In 1804 a petition was sent by the citizens to William Hamilton of Philadelphia, asking him if he would offer ground for the accommodation of the legislators. His favorable response to the request did much to abate the feeling against his father, Andrew Hamilton who, when Lancaster was founded, managed to divert the town from the site originally planned, ten miles from the present site, to his own

## **OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA**

**estate. For many years the people groaned under the necessity of paying ground rents to the family. In 1783, according to Johann Schoepf, these amounted to one thousand pounds a year.**

**But the capital did not remain long in Lancaster. In 1812 it went to Harrisburg, and the importance of the second great section of the road from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh was greatly increased.**

## VI

### THE GULPH ROAD

**T**HERE is no more picturesque road near Philadelphia than the Gulph Road, branches of which wind in what seem an aimless manner through Lower Merion Township. The pedestrian, the horseman or the automobile owner will enjoy a trip along the sections which are marked on a good road map as the Old Gulph Road. But the trip should be made in a leisurely manner that none of the points of historical interest may be missed.

The oldest section of the road leads out of Narberth by way of Narberth Avenue. On this section may be seen the ruins of several old mills dating from before the Revolution, notably the Dove Paper Mill, where the paper for Continental bank notes and other city government paper was made. These ruins are located beyond the junction with the Merion Square Road. From this point the Gulph meanders on for a number of miles, in what seems a very aimless fashion.

The section of the road which is of greatest interest begins at a point on Montgomery Avenue about halfway between Ardmore and Bryn Mawr Station on the Main Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad. After passing the Bryn Mawr Hotel and Bryn Mawr College, the Roberts Road leads to the right. A few moments after leaving the Gulph an old colonial mansion will

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

be seen at the end of a driveway which leads from Roberts Road. This is Harriton House, built in 1704 by Rowland Ellis, who called his estate Bryn Mawr, after his old home in Wales. He was obliged to transport in panniers, on horses, all the sand, stone and other material used for the house, since there were at that time no road vehicles available. It is a two-story house, built of stone, with quaint dormer windows.

In 1719 the house was bought by Richard Harriton, together with several hundred acres of land. The name Harriton was bestowed by the new owner, this being his own name with the change of a single letter.

From his old home in Delaware, where he had been a tobacco planter, Richard Harrison brought his household goods and slaves in a sailing vessel. The vessel was attacked by river pirates, and the goods were stolen. The slaves were compelled to find their way overland to the estate on the Gulph Road.

The story is told that some of these slaves soon afterward attempted to poison the members of the Harrison family, that they might be free to return to Delaware. One morning they put poison in the chocolate, and placed it on the table just before the silent moment which was kept by the family, after the manner of Friends. Just then there was a knock. Some one, rising to open the door, overturned the chocolate. No one would have known of the poison but for the pet cat, which died after licking up the chocolate. Frightened by the event, the guilty slaves confessed the crime they had attempted.

Some of the slaves were set to work in the fields

## THE GULPH ROAD

where the lord of the manor planted tobacco. When the product was ready for market, he was confronted by two difficulties—the hills were steep, and the Gulph Road was otherwise unsuited to wagons, even if such vehicles had been available. So he adopted a plan popular in the South. The tobacco was packed in great casks, through the center of each of which a pole was passed. This served as an axle. To the ends of the axle poles were attached. These served roughly for shafts for a horse, which rolled and bumped the casks to the Philadelphia market.

On the death of Richard Harrison in 1747 the property came into the possession of Hannah Harrison, his daughter. In 1774 she married Charles Thomson, friend of Benjamin Franklin, secretary of the Stamp Act Congress of 1765, and secretary of Congress for the first fourteen years of its history. History says that he presented to Washington the certificate of his election as President of the United States. But perhaps his greatest claim to fame is that he was known among the Indians with whom he dealt as "The Man Who Always Speaks the Truth."

After retiring from public life, Mr. Thomson devoted twelve years to a translation of the Bible from the Septuagint. The work was done in the old dining room of the mansion, which he used as a library. The translation was published in 1808, in four volumes. The translator lived until 1824, to the age of ninety-five years.

In his will he made known his wish to be laid in the Harriton family burying ground, located just across

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the Roberts Road, in the thick wood. This burying ground he had kept in view from the library, through a lane cut in the trees.

The lane has disappeared, but the cemetery may be reached by a path that leads to the little stone-walled enclosure, on the grounds of George Vaux, Jr., who is a direct descendant of Richard Harrison. On the wall is the inscription:

### Harriton Family Cemetery

Anno 1719

On the inside of this stone the statement is made:

This stone is opposite to the division between two rows of family graves wherein were interred Richard Harrison and a number of his descendants, also George Thomson, and Hannah Thomson, wife of Charles Thomson, daughter of Richard Harrison, Granddaughter of Isaac Norris and great-granddaughter of Governor Thomas Floyd.

One of the stones is erected in memory of Mary Roberts, of whom this is said:

Having experienced the affliction of losing an affectionate Husband, tender Parents, three Brothers and her only Sister, and being thus left the only surviving member of her Family, all Attachments to this world had Vanish'd and her Most earnest wish was to depart hence.

It is interesting to note that the claim is not made that Charles Thomson lies in this plot. He was buried here, but his body was not suffered to remain. When Laurel Hill Cemetery was opened in 1838, the Company wished the prestige that would come from

## THE GULPH ROAD

having a number of famous men buried there. The heirs of Charles Thomson were asked to allow the removal of his body. In view of his wish that he be buried by the side of his wife the request was refused. However, a nephew was found who authorized the removal, and one August night in 1838, under his direction, the agents of Laurel Hill set to work. They were still busy when a farm hand, on his way to the field, surprised them. They fled in haste, taking with them the body which they had recovered. Later a monument was erected in Laurel Hill to the memory of the Secretary of Congress.

Two miles beyond Roberts Road the turnpike forks. The left road leads to Devon and the Lancaster Pike. The right road leads to Valley Forge and Phoenixville. At the forks the Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the Revolution in 1892 erected a boulder monument with the inscription:

Gulph Mills.

The Main Continental Army  
Commanded by General George Washington  
Encamped in This Immediate Vicinity  
From December 13 to December 19

1777

Before Going to Winter Quarters  
At Valley Forge.

Back of the monument is Gulph Creek, which tumbles over a slight precipice. The sound of the fall can be heard from the monument. This fall furnished power for the old mill, built in 1741, whose ruins may still be seen at the left of the road, immediately after leaving the monument.

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While his army was encamped at this point, Washington thanked the officers and men for the patience and fortitude shown during the arduous campaign of the year about to close, and told them how necessary it would be that they be patient and courageous while in the winter quarters to which they were about to go. He told them plainly what they might expect, but he assured them that he wished he could provide better things for them, and asked them to remember that he would share their hardships with them.

Two days after the address was made the army marched on to Valley Forge, but a guard was left at the Gulph, under the direction of Colonel Aaron Burr, who was then twenty-two years old. Burr's biographer tells an incident of his service during this winter:

It appears that the militia stationed to guard the pass at the Gulph were continually sending false alarms to camp, which obliged the officers to get the troops under arms, and frequently to keep them on the alert all night. These alarms, it was soon found, arose from want of a proper system of observation and from a general looseness of discipline in the corps. General McDougall, who well knew the quality of Burr, as a soldier, recommended the Commander-in-Chief to give him the command of the post. This was done, which resulted in the introduction of a system of such rigorous discipline that mutiny was threatened and the death of the Colonel resolved upon. This came to the knowledge of Burr, and on the evening decided upon (every cartridge having first been drawn from the muskets) the detachments were ordered to parade. When in line one of the men stepped from the ranks and levelled his musket at him, whereupon Burr raised

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his sword and struck the arm of the mutineer above the elbow, nearly severing it from his body. In a few minutes the corps was dismissed, the arm of the mutineer was the next day amputated, and no more was heard of the mutiny.

Not far from the monument is a spot where the colonial road builders encountered a barrier—a ridge of the range, of volcanic origin, which stretches, at intervals, for about seventy miles from Maryland, through Chester County, and on to the Delaware. Gulph Creek cut its way through the lower edge of one of these hills, which rises with startling suddenness from the comparatively level country to a height of 290 feet above the creek bed. The way for the road had to be cut through the upheaved rock by the side of the creek, and the work was done in such a way that the road once formed, roughly, a half arch over the roadway. Since the road was built the rock has crumbled, but the overhanging roof is still there.

It is interesting to observe the curious formation of the cliff, which is a mixture of a material that crumbles in the fingers and rock as hard as flint. From the softer material may be broken off fragments some of which contain little garnets, too brittle to be of any value.

This spot, known as the Gulph, is a favorite place for picnics, but it was not a favorite spot with the soldiers. One of them, Albigence Waldo, said in his diary, on Saturday, December 13, 1777:

The Army march'd three miles from the West side of the River, and encamp'd near a place called the

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Gulph and not an improper name either. For this Gulph seems well adapted by its situation to keep us from the pleasure & enjoyments of this world, or being conversant with anybody in it.

Johann Schoepf, in his "Travels in the Confederacy," told of passing Gulph Mill "at a narrow gap between high rocks, apparently divided apart by force."

The traveler wrote of meeting wagons that were quite common in the days after the Revolution, loaded with lime, a staple of this "mountainous tract." Then he went on to tell of the limeburning industry, and of the trade in the product:

This is commonly managed not in walled furnaces but in square pits, sometimes but not always lined with fire-proof stone. In burning the lime, for various reasons, dead wood or dry logs are preferred, rather than green, and it is estimated that 15 cords of wood are needed to burn 5-600 bushels of lime. The wood is bought on the stump, and 5 shillings Pensyl. Current (2-3 of a Spanish doler) the cord is regarded as dear. According to the price of the wood, and the cost of cutting and hauling, a bushel of burnt lime can be sold at 8 to 13 pence Pensylv. Current. Most of it is brought to the city, but the people of the region use a great deal of it on their lands. Being near a good market, and the land having long been worked, they find this means of improving their fields very convenient.

This garrulous German traveler became acquainted with the people along the road as well as with their occupation. He noted that those who live "in and along these hills seem not to be the most prosperous and their dwellings are not the best. But," he added,

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"they are not forgotten in the tax levies; an ordinary house, *e. g.*, with 100 acres of land, paid this year 20 Pd. Pennsylv. Current. The owner, a farmer, would therefore rather live somewhere else, but he expressed a singular dislike for the famed county on the Ohio," because in Kentucky there is no real winter, and where there is no winter, people would have to work year in and year out!

Once he stopped for refreshments at a farm house where he was told by the wife who ministered to him "how her husband, during the war had, by a wise use of his post in the Land Office, got to himself a handsome estate, seven plantations, and could now laugh at the world." He had made his purchases with paper money, playing on the credulity of his patriotic fellow countrymen.

Of course there were men of this stamp, but as a rule the people along the Gulph Road were in hearty sympathy with the brave defenders of their country, whom they watched as they marched the seven miles from Gulph Mills to their encampment at Valley Forge, most of them without shoes and stockings, and all of them suffering from cold and exposure.

George Washington Parke Custis, in his "Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington," told graphically of the hardships of the troops:

The winter of 1777 set in early, and with unusual severity. The military operations of both armies had ceased, when a detachment of the Southern troops were seen plodding their weary way to winter quarters at Valley Forge. The appearance of the horse-guard

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

announced the approach of the Commander-in-Chief: the officer commanding the detachment, choosing the most favorable ground, paraded his men to pay to their General the honors of the passing salute. As Washington rode slowly up, he was observed to be eying very earnestly something that attracted his attention on the frozen surface of the road. Having returned the salute, with that native grace, that dignified air and manner, that won the admiration of the soldiery of the old Revolutionary days, the Chief reigned up his charger, and ordering the commanding officer of the detachment to his side, addressed him as follows: "How comes it, sir, that I have tracked the march of your troops by the blood stains of their feet upon the frozen ground? Were there no shoes in the Commissary's stores, that this sad spectacle is to be seen along the public highways?" The officer replied: "Your Excellency may rest assured that this sight is as painful to my feelings as it can be to yours; but there is no remedy within our reach. When the shoes were issued, the different regiments were served, and the stores became exhausted before we could obtain even the smallest supply!"

The General was observed to be deeply affected by his officer's description of the soldiers' privations and sufferings. His compressed lips, the heaving of his manly chest, betokened the powerful emotions that were struggling in his bosom, when, turning toward the troops with a voice tremulous yet kindly, Washington exclaimed, "poor fellows"; then giving rein to his charger rode away.

In this interesting event in the life and actions of Washington he appears in a new light. He is no longer the grave, the dignified, the awe-inspiring and unapproachable General-in-Chief of the armies of his country. All these characteristics have vanished, and

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**Pater Patriæ** appears amid his companions in arms in all his moral grandeur, giving vent to his native goodness of heart.

It is not difficult to close the eyes and reconstruct the scene as the sturdy Continentals passed this way. The road is far smoother than it was then, but the sound of the water falling over the rocks is the same, and there is still the sound of whirring machinery, for instead of the old Gulph Mill, there is the Montgomery Worsted Mill, located on the bank of the creek a short distance beyond the Gulph.

The old house by the side of the Philadelphia and Western embankment, also on the left, should have attention. This house, built in 1803, was the manor house on the large Macfarland estate to which belonged much of the land in the neighborhood. The fine doorway and stairway will repay examination. The original floors are still in use.

"Gulph" is the name called by trainmen on the Philadelphia and Western Railroad as they reach the station near the mills, though Ballygomingo was the name given by some early settler; perhaps after a spot in Wales to which his thoughts turned often. This name was later shortened to Balligo.

The Gulph station offers a convenience to those who wish to pass over the Gulph Road on foot. The trip from Bryn Mawr to Valley Forge and Phoenixville is too long for a single outing, but the pedestrian might take the train at Sixty-ninth and Market Streets, alight at Gulph station, and walk the four miles to Bryn Mawr. Another day the longer walk might be

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

taken to Valley Forge, with car from the village to Phoenixville, thus completing this important section of the road.

A short distance after passing under the railroad the turnpike crosses the creek on what is called the Foederal bridge, whose story is told on a stone built into the left parapet:

Montgomery  
County  
Upper Merion  
Township.  
1789.

In the 2nd year the  
Foederal Union.

Beyond the bridge, is the Bird in Hand Inn. The old appearance of the building and the swinging sign board leads one to think that this is the original inn of the name seen by Washington and his men. But it is a comparatively modern hotel. The historic Bird in Hand is a little farther along the road, which takes a sharp turn to the left after crossing the bridge.

On the hill back of the new Bird in Hand, on the road leading to Conshohocken, is Poplar Lane, once the home of Isaac Hughes, Lieutenant Colonel of the Flying Camp of the Pennsylvania militia. Half a mile to the left, along the Norristown road, is the site of the house built on Walnut Grove Farm by John Hughes, father of Isaac Hughes, who came to America in search of his son Hugh, after he had run away from the parental home in Wales, in 1680.

Hugh Hughes became a tanner in Philadelphia,



POPLAR LANE, NEAR GULPH MILLS, 1768



**THE KING OF PRUSSIA TAVERN**



**HARRITON HOUSE, NEAR BRYN MAWR, 1704**

## THE GULPH ROAD

but he moved later to Walnut Grove, which came into his possession on his father's death. John Hughes, the stamp officer of colonial days in Pennsylvania, was the next owner of Walnut Grove, and when his son, Isaac Hughes, was married, he lived with his parents on the old farm. He was master of the house when Washington and members of his suite paid frequent visits to the place.

Later Isaac Hughes moved to Poplar Lane. Until recently it was thought that the oldest portion of the house was built in 1769, but not long ago the present owner, P. R. Varian, on opening a great fireplace, discovered the date 1758 plainly lettered on the fireback.

From the Hughes family Poplar Lane passed to the possession of George Nugent, a Philadelphia merchant, who had retired with a fortune after trading for years in the West Indies. Mr. Nugent had two hobbies, his farm, where he tried advanced methods of cultivation that made his neighbors jeer, and his children, for whose education he founded a school. The buildings are still standing, back of Poplar Lane, on the Conshohocken road. There are two of them, a residence for his son, who was the proprietor of a woolen mill in the valley, as well as for the master of the school, and the seminary, a large structure of unusual architecture, whose walls are two and one-half feet thick. The most prominent features to the observer from the road are the seven fan-like windows in the end wall, two for each of the main rooms, and one for the attic room, in which the boys had their dormitory.

Mr. Nugent was not a selfish man; he freely opened

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

the Collegiate Institute, as he called it, to the children of the neighbors who made sport of his advanced experiments in farming.

After a season of prosperity the Institute was closed, and the building became the home of the Academy of Natural Science. In recent years, when the Philadelphia and Western Railroad was under construction, it was the home of a gang of Italian laborers. The present owner of Poplar Lane bought it that he might keep away undesirable tenants.

Another house whose last inhabitants were laborers on the railroad is on the Gulph Road, a short distance up the hill, beyond the old Bird in Hand. This stone building is rapidly falling in ruins. A peep within the sagging door is repaid by a glimpse of a curious old oven built into the fireplace. Beyond the fireplace is a cramped stairway that is not much better than a ladder.

"What a foolish man the builder was!" a visitor to the house exclaimed, after climbing to the third story. "He had all out-doors before him, yet he put up a cramped three-story house! How pleased his wife must have been!"

In spite of the sign-board near Hughes Corner, which makes quite contradictory statements as to the distance to the King of Prussia Tavern, it is not far to this famous old hostelry. There is a question as to the date of this building. The swinging sign is dated 1709, though some say that 1768 is the correct date. Yet the title papers are dated 1718. An early keeper of this popular hostelry was a Prussian, to whom the

## THE GULPH ROAD

name was a reminder of his home. Most of the building has been remodeled, since the days when it was a resort of the spies of the British army who sought information of the movements of Washington and his men, but the kitchen is about as it was then. Fortunately the original sign was recovered from the waste pile in the blacksmith shop a few rods away.

A few moments after passing the old tavern the graceful columns of an old house appear through the trees. Just enough can be seen to make one want to go down the private road that leads from the turnpike around to the front of the mansion. This house was built in 1820, when William Cleaver married Jane Thomas. Miss Thomas was born in what is now known as the Ashbridge house on Montgomery Avenue, just beyond Bryn Mawr, which dates from 1769. The new house was a copy of the old homestead. This is now the home of C. W. Bray.

The entrance to Valley Forge Park is not far from the Bray homestead, and it is possible to approach this over a good road; but many will prefer to keep to the Gulph Road, even if the final stretch is rather poor. Otherwise they will miss an old landmark on the left over the ridge above Trout Creek. This house was occupied during a part of the period of the Valley Forge encampment by Brigadier General George Weedon, a Virginian, who was sometimes called "Joe Gourd," because, as a Virginia inn-keeper, he used gourds in distributing liquid refreshment to his customers. The house, remodeled, is now the country home of Congressman John R. K. Scott.

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

The Gulph Road entrance to the park is to the left of the arch erected by the United States Government to the memory of the officers and private soldiers of the Continental Army, dedicated in 1914. Inside the arch is the inscription:

And here, in this place of sacrifice, in this vale of humiliation, in this valley of the shadow of that death out of which the life of America rose rejuvenate and free, let us believe with an abiding faith that to them America will seem as dear and liberty as sweet and progress as glorious as they were to our fathers and are to you and me, and that this institution which made us happy, preserved by the virtue of our children, shall bless the benevolent generations of the time to come.

Thus Henry Armitt Brown spoke of the heroism of the defenders of their country. But they must have felt far from heroic on that December day when they entered the wood at "Wolley Forge," as the site of the winter camp was called by an officer at White-marsh when the plans were first announced.

On December 18, the day before the site was occupied, Washington asked the regimental officers to divide the soldiers into groups of twelve, each of which was to build a hut of logs. A reward was promised to the twelve men of each regiment who should complete their hut first, and in the most workman-like manner. The inventive genius of officers and men was stimulated by the offer of one hundred dollars for the best suggestion of an effective substitute for a roof which would be cheaper than boards and could be applied more promptly.



**THE BRAY HOUSE, NEAR VALLEY FORGE**  
Residence of Mr. C. W. Bray



**WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS AT VALLEY FORGE**



**THE KNOLL, PHOENIXVILLE**



**MOORE HALL, NEAR PHOENIXVILLE**

## THE GULPH ROAD

Thomas Paine, in a letter to Benjamin Franklin, gave a vivid picture of the scene during the days when the men became builders:

I was there when the army first began to build huts. They appeared to me like a family of beavers. Everyone busy, some carrying logs, others mud, and the rest plastering them together. The whole was raised in a few days, and it is a curious collection of buildings in the true rustic order.

Like a good comrade, Washington lived with his men until they had the shelter ready. Not until Christmas Day did he move to the house of Isaac Potts, the miller. This was the day when he entered in his carefully kept account book:

To expenditure in the different and continued movements of the Army from Germantown Sept. 15 till we huttet at Valley Forge, the 25th of Dec. pr. mem, \$1,037.00 or £78,1s.

Several days earlier Washington sent to Congress a letter from General Varnum, who said:

Three days successively we have been destitute of bread. Two days we have been entirely without meat.

On December 23, Washington said that unless there was a great and sudden change in the commissary department, the army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things: "starve, dissolve, or disperse in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they can."

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

When the Assembly of Pennsylvania found fault with the action of taking the men into winter quarters, Washington wrote:

I can assure those gentlemen, that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold, bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow, without clothes or blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel superabundantly for them, and from my soul, I pity those miseries which it is neither in my power to relieve or prevent.

General Lafayette, in his Memoirs, gave another telling picture of the later sufferings of the men:

The unfortunate soldiers were in want of every thing; they had neither coats, hats, shirts, nor shoes; their feet and legs froze till they became black, and it was often necessary to amputate them . . . The army frequently remained whole days without provisions, and the patient endurance of both soldiers and officers was a miracle which each moment seemed to renew.

Sergeant Andersen Kemp wrote to his mother:

We have had a dreadful time of it through the winter at Valley Forge, sometimes for a week at a time with nothing but frozen potatoes and even worse still for clothing. Sometimes the men obliged to sleep by turns for want of blankets to cover the whole, and the rest keeping watch by the fire. There is hardly a man who has not been frostbitten. . . . But our distress for want of food was nothing compared to the grumbling of some of the men, and, I am sorry to say, of some of the officers.

## THE GULPH ROAD

Surgeon Waldo told thus of a midnight feast:

At 12 of the clock Providence sent us a little mutton with which we immediately had some Broth made & a fine Stomach for same. Ye who eat Pumpkin Pie and Roast Turkies and yet Curse Fortune for using you ill, Curse her no more lest she reduce your Allowance of her favours to a bit of Fire Cake & a draught of Cold Water & in Cold Weather too.

On March 1, 1778, General Weedon indicated in his Orderly Book that conditions were improving. After the manner of the true optimist he made the best of privation, made excuses for the failure of provisions and looked forward to better things:

Thank Heaven, our Country abounds with provisions and with prudent management we need not apprehend want for any length of time. Defects in the Commissarie Department, Contingencies of Weather and other Temporary Impedements have subjected and may again subject us to deficiency for a few days. But Soldiers, American Soldiers will despise the manners of Repining at Such trifling strockes of Adversity, Trifling indeed when compared with the Transcendent prize which will undoubtedly crown their patience and perseverance.

The brightest day of the six months' encampment was May 7, 1778, when the soldiers rejoiced because of the treaty of Alliance between France and the United States. This event gave them courage for the movement undertaken on June 18, the day the British evacuated Philadelphia, when the camp was gladly left behind.

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The story of that winter has been told effectively, in verse, by Thomas Buchanan Read. After speaking of the hardships of which General Weedon made light, he said:

Such was the winter's awful sight  
For many a dreary day and night,  
What time our country's hope forlorn,  
Of every needed comfort shorn,  
Lay housed within a hurried tent,  
Where every keen blast found a rent,  
And oft the snow was seen to sift  
Along the floor its piling drift,  
Or, mocking the scant blankets' fold,  
Across the night couch frequent rolled.  
Where every path by a soldier beat,  
Or every track where a sentinel stood,  
Still held the print of naked feet,  
And oft the crimson stain of blood:  
Where Famine held her spectral court,  
And joined by all her fierce allies:  
She ever loved a camp or fort  
Beleaguered by the wintry skies,—  
But chiefly when Disease is by,  
To sink the frame and dim the eye,  
Until, with seeking forehead bent,  
In martial garments cold and damp,  
Pale Death patrols from tent to tent,  
To count the charnels of the camp.

Gulph Road leads across the park, past the Letitia Penn schoolhouse, and past the woods which, it is said, were the scene of an incident related by Benson J. Lossing:

Mr. Potts the Quaker relates that one day while the Americans were encamped at Valley Forge, he

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strolled up the creek, and when not far from the dam, heard a solemn voice. He walked quickly in the direction of it, and saw Washington's horse tied to a sapling. In a thicket near by was the beloved chief upon his knees in prayer, his face suffused with tears. Like Moses at the bush, Isaac felt that he was on holy ground, and withdrew unobserved.

After crossing the creek, the road leads directly to Phoenixville, three miles distant. The oldest house by the way is Moore Hall, on a hill beyond the waterworks, immediately after crossing Pickering Creek.

William Moore, the owner of the estate at the time of the Revolution, was born in Philadelphia on May 6, 1699. Twenty years later he graduated at Oxford. His father, who was Collector of the Port of Philadelphia, gave him 240 acres on Pickering Creek. When the land came into his possession there were on it a house, a stable and a sawmill. This sawmill was a source of wonder to the Indians, who liked to come and look and listen.

Perhaps it was one of these very Indians who once visited the shop of a smith near Valley Forge, showing a gun which needed repairs. The blacksmith was unable to help him, for his supply of fuel was exhausted. The Indian took a basket, hurried away and came back after a while with a quantity of coal which he insisted would make a fine fire. The fire was replenished and the gun was repaired, but he refused to tell where he had found the "black stones." Evidently the Indian knew of a supply of coal in the neighborhood, but its location has never been found.

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The house on the new property did not answer the needs of William Moore, who longed to entertain plenty of company. So he built a house which, a few years later, was succeeded by a mansion that became famous throughout all the region, not only for its own sake, but because in it was shown a hospitality remarkable even among the open-handed colonists.

The owner of the mansion had many slaves, whom he quartered in a stone house near Moore Hall. Some of these slaves persisted in running away, as appears from advertisements in the Philadelphia papers of the period. In the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of August 10, 1730, this notice was inserted:

Ran away from William Moor of Moore Hall, in Chester County, a likely young negro man, named Jack. Speaks but indifferent English, and had on, when he went away, a new Isenburg shirt, a pair of striped breeches, a striped ticking waistcoat and an old Dimity coat of his master's with buttons of horse teeth set in brass and cloth sleeves, and a felt hat, almost new. Whoever secures said negro and brings him to his master, or to John Moore, Esq. Philadelphia, shall receive 20 shillings and reasonable charge.

William Moore.

Mr. Moore was prominent both in Church and State. He was at different times a vestryman in St. James Episcopal Church on the Perkiomen and of St. David's Church at Radnor. He was colonel of the Chester County militia, organized for defense against the Indians, he was a member of the Assembly from 1733 to 1740, and was appointed a Justice of the Peace

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in 1740. He was a good official, but he made enemies who were not slow to make charges against him, when they saw a good chance to hurt him.

Their opportunity came when he was out of favor with the Assembly. The majority of the members of the Assembly were Friends, opposed to war, but he insisted that means be taken for preparation against a threatened Indian attack. Once he wrote to the Assembly that two thousand men were coming down to Philadelphia from Chester County to compel the passage of the militia law.

Just at this time came to the Assembly a complaint from Chester County, declaring that Squire Moore had been guilty of tyranny and injustice. He defended himself in a paper printed in Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Provost Smith of the University of Pennsylvania helped him secure a German translation, that the defense might be published in German also.

But the Assembly did not like the statement made in this defense that their readiness to listen to the charge was scandalous. A warrant was issued for his arrest, and two men were sent to Moore Hall. In January, 1758, he was arrested and taken to jail in Philadelphia. Provost Smith was arrested at the same time. Moore's defense was burned by the hangman, and no attention was paid to habeas corpus proceedings. The Provost was compelled to hear his classes in the jail. Both men were released at the close of the session of the Assembly, but they were liable to arrest as soon as the Assembly met again.

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The Provost went to England at once, arriving January 1, 1759, and related the facts to the authorities. When he returned the Assembly, convened by the Privy Council, was compelled to listen to a rebuke given by Governor Hamilton.

The Committee of Congress appointed to investigate the condition of the army at Valley Forge made their headquarters at Moore Hall. They remained three months, and decided that Washington was the best man in the country for the head of the army.

Washington was himself a frequent visitor at Moore Hall, though the tradition that he once went there on a fishing expedition is erroneous.

On July 30, 1787, he wrote in his diary:

In company with M<sup>r</sup> Gov<sup>r</sup> [Gouverneur] Morris, and in his Phæton with grey horses, went up to one Jane Moore's in the vicinity of Valley Forge to get Trout.

By mistake the *Pennsylvania Racket* of August 1, 1787, said:

Monday his Excellency General Washington was set out for Moore Hall in order to visit his old quarters at the Valley Forge in this State.

On July 31 Washington wrote:

Whilst M<sup>r</sup> Morris was fishing I rid over the old Cantonment of the American [Army] of the Winter 1777 & 8—visited all the Works w<sup>ch</sup> were in Ruins; and the Incampments in woods where the ground had not been cultivated. On my return to M<sup>rs</sup> Moore's I found M<sup>r</sup> Robert Morris & his lady there.

William Moore died May 30, 1782, and was buried in St. David's churchyard at Radnor. His body lies

## THE GULPH ROAD

directly in front of the door of the old church. By his side is his wife, who inherited his property because, as he said in his will, she was "never frightend by the rude rabble or Dismaied by the Insolent threats of the ruling powers. Happy Woman, a Pattern to her Sex, and worthy the Relationship she bore to the Right Honourable and Noble family from which she sprung."

Perhaps a mile from Moore Hall, on the edge of Phoenixville, is The Knoll, once the seat of the Morris family. Later it became the property of Charles Wheatley, an Englishman who married into the family. He was interested in metallurgy, and he was delighted when he found a vein of copper on his property. A deep shaft was dug on his land. This was long ago filled up.

Fountain Inn, in Phoenixville, was at one time the headquarters of General Howe. In front of the inn, by the side of the car tracks, is a marker on which is this record:

The Farthest Inland Point Reached in the British Invasion of the Northern Colonies during the Revolutionary War, September 21-23, 1777.

Not far away is the old General Pike Hotel, built in 1807, and directly across the road is the Jones Mansion, built by John Longstreth. During the British invasion the Hessians came to the house and took all the geese, straw and everything else they could lay hands on. His daughter Sarah married Robert Jones, and they lived in the old house during the years before the Civil War.

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Phoenixville was on the route of the Underground Railway on which so many slaves found their way to freedom in Canada. There were four stations in the neighborhood of the town, and of these the Jones Mansion was one. Visitors to the house are shown a wood closet in the chimney where the slaves were hidden during the day. Once a father and mother and their baby were crowded in these narrow quarters when the searchers came to the house after them. The baby cried, and Mrs. Jones was in an agony. But the hiding place was not discovered, and that night the slaves were sent on their way.

A second station was kept by Elijah F. Penny-packer at the Corner Stores. In the History of the Underground Railway it is said that he did a thriving business. He "kept a large two-horse dearborn, in which he took loads of fugitives by day and by night. If they reached his house in the night, and there was urgency to proceed, they were taken on without delay. In case they were taken in daytime, the women and children were placed in the rear end of the wagon, the children covered up, and the women disguised by wearing veils. The men walked singly so as not to excite suspicion."

## VII

### THE RIDGE ROAD TO PERKIOMEN

**L**IKE many others of the old roads out of Philadelphia, the Ridge Road—so named because it is on the ridge between the Schuylkill and the Wissahickon—follows an old Indian trail.

The owners of the primitive limekilns along the Schuylkill sought an easier way to market than the rough forest path afforded. So, in the days of Governor William Markham, a cartway was opened along the ridge. An early historian records that this cartway led "from the 3d limekiln into Plimouth rode, near Cressoon, where there is neither improved land, hill nor water to impede."

Gradually the country was developed. The forests were cleared, the land was improved, and thousands of settlers found their way to the region tributary to the Ridge.

A map made in 1796 showed that everything north of Callowhill Street was country. The entire territory beyond was shown as well covered with trees.

In 1804 the country along the Ridge Road was so open that it formed a refuge for many citizens in a time of need. Robert Sutcliffe wrote in his account of his travels in America:

Joseph Paul Ridley took me in his carriage to see a large encampment on the Ridge road, where many poor persons were accommodated who had left Philadelphia to avoid the infection of yellow fever.

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Thirty years later the country beyond Twentieth Street was still wild and lonely. In 1830 two highwaymen attacked a Ridge Road stage carrying the United States mail, at what is now Twenty-third Street and Ridge Avenue. A hue and cry was raised, and the desperadoes were apprehended and thrown into jail at Seventeenth and Spring Garden Streets. It is said that when an appeal was made to President Jackson and he pardoned one of them, an Englishman, but refused to interfere with the punishment of the other, an Irishman, Irish residents of the city thought this an insult to them. On the day of execution soldiers were sent to guard the gallows lest the infuriated compatriots of the offender should effect a rescue.

As early as 1803 a petition was made to the legislature for a turnpike road along the Ridge, but this was refused because the Germantown turnpike was parallel, and at some points was but a short distance away.

Eight years more passed before the desired permission was wrung from the careful legislators, but on March 30, 1811, an act was passed "to enable the governor to incorporate a company for making an artificial road beginning at the intersection of Vine and Tenth Street," Philadelphia, and thence to the Perkiomen. The route of the new road was to be "as near as may be consistent with economy and utility, along, over and upon the bed of the present road . . . to Wissahiccon creek; thence to Barren Hill; thence to Norristown in the County of Montgomery; and thence by the nearest and best route to the Perkioming bridge in the county aforesaid."

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Earlier turnpike roads had had so much difficulty with travelers who sought to escape the payment of tolls that it was thought wise to include in the act of incorporation a provision for the fining of anyone who should pass a tollgate without paying the required fee, or who should evade payment in some other way. It was further ordered "that if any person or persons shall wilfully break, deface, pull up or prostrate any milestone, which shall be placed in pursuance of this act on the side of the said road, or shall obliterate the letters or figures inscribed thereon," or on a direction post, he was to be fined ten dollars.

Part of this early turnpike was used for the first stage of the journey of Samuel Breck, the framer of the public schools law in Pennsylvania, when he took a trip from his estate, Sweetbrier, on the Schuylkill, to Boston. Mr. and Mrs. Breck, Miss Breck and a maid were in the party. The trip required twenty-six days, the distance covered was six hundred miles, "over excellent roads and meeting with exceedingly good inns, and not an accident excepting the lameness of one horse." Mr. Breck carefully added that the expense of the journey was about five hundred dollars.

It is interesting to read in the Recollections of Samuel Breck a description of the Sweetbrier estate, which is now a part of Fairmount Park. The house still stands not far from Belmont Mansion. Of his home Mr. Breck proudly said:

My residence has been when at home with my family where it now is, for more than thirty years, being on an estate belonging to me, situated on the right

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bank of the Schuylkill, in the township of Blockley, County of Philadelphia, and two miles from the western part of the city. The mansion on the estate I built in 1797. It is a fine stone house, rough-cast, fifty-three feet long, thirty-eight broad, and three stories high, having out-buildings of every kind suitable for elegance and comfort. The prospect consists of the river, animated by the great trade carried on in boats of about thirty ton, drawn by horses; of a beautiful sloping lawn terminating at that river, now nearly four hundred yards wide opposite the portico; of side-screen woods, of gardens, green-house, etc. Sweetbrier is the name of my villa.

The first famous landmark along the Ridge Road, Girard College, was completed in 1848. The northeastern boundary of the college grounds extends from Nineteenth to Twentieth Streets. To-day houses cluster thickly about the college grounds, and pleas have been made to the city for opening streets through the large campus, but when the site was chosen it was well out of town.

For forty years before his death, which occurred in 1831, Stephen Girard, the founder of the college, was the loneliest man in Philadelphia. His wife was in an insane hospital. Hints of his great loneliness were given in his letters. Once he said: "I live like a galley slave, often passing the whole night without sleeping. I am wrapped up in a labyrinth of anxieties and am worn out with care. I do not value fortune. The love of labor is my highest ambition." And again: "When I rise in the morning, my only effort is to labor so hard that when night comes I may be enabled to sleep soundly."

The lonely worker who did not value money for

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its own sake used it for the good of his country and for his fellows. During the war of 1812 his was the part that Robert Morris played during the Revolution. Once, when the public subscribed but twenty thousand dollars to a national loan of five million dollars, he restored public confidence by taking the remainder.

And when his will was read it was found that he had left the bulk of his fortune to care for the poor boys of Philadelphia and the State. He planned that the college should be open to poor white boys, between six and ten years of age. Every orphan admitted was to be bound by indenture to the city authorities until twenty-one years of age, his entire care and education to be paid for by the college. No boy, he declared, must be permitted to remain in the institution after the age of eighteen. At that time, if not before, he should be apprenticed to learn a trade.

One hundred orphans were admitted when the college opened. To-day there are more than fourteen hundred boys enrolled. Thus the lonely man's dream of bringing joy to the hearts of others has been realized.

Several miles beyond Girard College is Falls of Schuylkill, noted in early days as the Mecca of the fisherman. The early name of the settlement was Fort St. David's, so called for an early fishing and social club which flourished until the Revolution. Loyalists thought of the members of this club as traitors to the king of England, and they took pleasure in seeing the Hessians tear down the log club house and in using the logs in building huts for the officers of the British force.

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Further down the stream stood another fishing club, the Colony in Schuylkill, founded in 1732, which now, under the name of the State in Schuylkill, has its club house on the Delaware, not far from Eddington station on the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Fishing was good at the Falls of Schuylkill until the building of the Fairmount Water Works dam, and during the season tons of fish were taken from the water daily.

In 1805 Sutcliffe told in an entertaining manner of the great catch he witnessed:

At this part of the river, the Shad Fishery is prosecuted with great spirit in the early part of summer. Almost every farmer who happens to have a field on the banks of the river, keeps a net for the purpose; and, with a little industry, may, in the course of two or three weeks, lay up a supply for the whole year. The fish are salted, and are brought out, through the winter, as a relish at breakfast and supper. I have sometimes stood by in the evening watching the people taking these fish. The nets used are about fifty or sixty yards in length, and about six feet in width; the lower side being weighted with lead, and the upper side supported with pieces of cork. One end of the net is fixed firm to a stake on the edge of the river, whilst the other end is taken out in a small boat towards the other side. After getting to the extent of it, the boat is rowed down the river, bringing the end of the net with it, and at length it comes to land a little below the stake to which the other end of the net is fastened, forming a circular enclosure, within which the fish are secured. As the net approaches the bank of the river, the fishes are seen struggling in all directions; till at last they are brought close to the shore,

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where they are quickly gathered up, and thence into the boat. Several hundreds are, at times, taken at one draught, but as the fishing is continued through the night, during the season, the farmers often think themselves well paid with 20 or 30, and they weigh about 5 pounds each.

The Falls and the region up the river as far as Norristown saw much of Washington and Howe during the Revolution. At one time Washington's army crossed the Schuylkill at Levering's Ford, at Manayunk, just beyond the Falls. Colonel Pickering told in his journal of an annoying delay at this crossing, which took place on September 14, 1777. One cannot help sympathizing with the soldiers, while at the same time seeing the commander's point of view:

The army, having yesterday cleaned their arms, and received ammunition to complete fifty rounds a man, this day marched up a few miles and recrossed the Schuylkill at Levering's Ford, the water being nearly up to the waist. We lost there much time, by reason of the men stripping off their stockings and shoes and some of them their breeches. It was a pleasant day, and, had the men marched directly over by platoons without stripping, no harm could have ensued; their clothes would have dried by night on their march, and the boots would not have hurt their feet. The officers, - too, discovered a delicacy quite unbecoming soldiers; quitting their platoons, and some getting horses of their acquaintances to ride over, and others getting over in a canoe. They would have better done their duty, had they kept at their platoons and led on their men.

Another incident is told of those trying days, of which John Kirk was the hero. Near the point where

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School Lane intersects Ridge Road this man, one of Washington's spies, popularly known as Fearnought, unexpectedly met a trooper of the British picket. The trooper was armed, but Kirk was unarmed. Stealthily he crept upon the unsuspecting trooper, and then sprang suddenly upon him, at the same time wresting the gun from his surprised foe. Clubbing the weapon, he knocked the trooper insensible, and so was able to make his way safely to Washington's camp, with his valuable information.

Perhaps the most historic building in Falls of Schuylkill is the house, near Indian Queen Lane, which was occupied for many years, beginning in 1773, by Dr. William Smith, first Provost of the University of Pennsylvania. It is related that on April 17, 1790, Dr. Smith was dining here, with David Rittenhouse, the astronomer, Thomas Mifflin, first Governor of Pennsylvania under the Constitution, and several others, when word was brought to them of the death of Benjamin Franklin. At the time a fierce thunderstorm was raging. Dr. Smith, always quick with his pen, on the spot wrote the following verses:

Cease, cease, ye clouds, your elemental strife!  
Why rage ye thus, as if to threaten life?  
Seek, seek no more to shake our souls with dread;  
What busy mortal told you, "Franklin's Dead"?  
What though he yields at Jove's imperious nod?  
With Rittenhouse he left his magic rod!

In 1777, when Washington's army was encamped in the neighborhood, General Stephen of Virginia had his headquarters in this mansion. During the yellow

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fever epidemic of 1793, General Knox, Secretary of the Treasury, and Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Auditor of the Treasury, had their offices here.

In a house on Dr. Smith's estate lived Joseph Neef, who became famous because of his introduction into America of Pestalozzi's system of education. In 1808 he published a small book, printed in Philadelphia, in which he explained how he became interested in the system; how he had studied with Pestalozzi in Berne, Switzerland, and had taught with him there, and how he had been brought to America by friends of education, who paid his expenses while he was learning their language, that he might show Americans the superiority of objects over books in teaching.

Not far from the Smith mansion, on Indian Queen Lane, is a historic schoolhouse where books rather than objects have always been used. This was built as an academy in 1813, the funds being raised by subscription. On Sunday it was used for religious purposes. This has been called the birthplace of the churches, for here many of them made their start. It is now a mission of St. James the Less.

Falls of Schuylkill has an even greater claim to distinction than its connection with early education through the work of Joseph Neef and through the old Academy. Here, it has been claimed, anthracite coal was first used for manufacturing purposes, in a wire mill, one of the early industries of this manufacturing town.

Philadelphia long looked with suspicion on the "black stones," the first of which came to the city in 1786 or 1787. Some of this importation from Wilkes-

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barre was distributed among the shipwrights and smiths, but most of it was taken to the cellar of Robert Morris's partner, John Nicholson. When he was thrown into prison for debt, those who seized the valuables in his house threw the coal out on Franklin Square, regarding it as rubbish.

One historian says that an early miner issued hand-bills printed in both German and English, explaining the method of burning the coal. "They went also to blacksmiths' shops, exhibited certificates from smiths who had successfully used the new fuel, and sometimes bribed the journeymen to make the experiment fairly. All these efforts availed very little." It was not until 1819 that a newspaper advertised the fuel, though within six years of that time it had won its way to the coal bins of the citizens of Philadelphia.

Soon after leaving the Falls, the traveler comes to the High Bridge Tavern, one of the early hostelrys of the Ridge Road, which had a better reputation than the road house of which Elizabeth Drinker told, under date of August 29, 1771:

This evening our Landlady, a dirty, old, Dutch woman, refused changing very dirty for clean sheets; this after much entreaty she pretended to comply—but we found to our mortification she had taken the same sheets, sprinkled them and then ironed and hung them by the fire, and placed them again on the Bed; so that we were necessitated to use our Cloaks &c., and this night slept without sheets. With the assistance of our two women servants cooking, we supped very well, and slept better than we had reason to expect, all in one room.

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Next day she wrote:

H. S. and self each folded a dirty sheet Nutmeg fashion, and left them covered up in ye Beds, for the old woman to tag and scold at. May it be the means to mend her manners.

The High Bridge Tavern is familiar to Philadelphians because it is near the beginning of the Wissahickon Drive, one of the most famous bits of road in the country. At every turn new beauties are discovered, and in most unexpected places historic spots are found.

Among the earliest settlers in this beautiful glen were a company of forty men who came, in 1694 from Geneva, with John Kelpius and Daniel Falckner. They had come to America hoping to be free from religious intolerance, and here they thoroughly enjoyed themselves. One of these Hermits of the Wissahickon, as they were called, wrote:

What pleases one here most is that one can be peasant, scholar, priest and nobleman all at the same time without interference, which of all modes of living has been found to be the best and most satisfactory since patriarchal time. To be a peasant and nothing else is a sort of cattle life; to be a scholar and nothing else, such as in Europe, is a morbid and self-indulgent existence; to be a priest and nothing else ties life to blinders and responsibilities; to be a nobleman and nothing else makes godless and riotous.

The Wissahickon was a favorite haunt of Captain Allen McLane, who commanded the famous cavalry troop known as McLane's Rangers. The British put a price on the head of this daring commander whose

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unexpected appearances and hardy exploits kept them guessing. The region for many miles around, as far as Barren Hill and Germantown, was apt to shelter him at any time. He was an invaluable aid to Washington in intercepting the supplies which the British tried to smuggle into the city.

Perhaps his most famous exploit was on the night of the Meschianza, the entertainment given in honor of Howe and some of his officers when they were about to leave Philadelphia for England. Taking the enemy at a disadvantage, McLane made a sudden descent on the British front. "An abatis of felled trees with bristling branches had been built all the way from the Schuylkill to a point in Germantown so as to cover the approach to the city by the Ridge Road, Germantown Road and intervening roads. The whole line of abatis was fired by the dragoons under McLane." The alarm was given. Thomas Buchanan Read has written of this:

There rose a tumult wild without,  
A hurried rush of wild alarms,  
The flash of flames, the sentinel's shout,  
The shuddering guests no more could doubt  
But quaked to think the rebel crew  
Had burst in all their midnight power  
Upon them in their revel hour  
To act the Trenton scene anew.

McLane and most of his followers crept by way of Barren Hill to Washington's army. There he was reinforced. He turned upon his pursuers and drove them back to the city.



**THE ANGEL HOUSE, HARMANVILLE**

The name was given to this house because of the imported marble in the front wall which came from "Robert Morris's Folly" in Philadelphia



**RESIDENCE OF DR. WILLIAM SMITH, FIRST PROVOST OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, FALLS OF SCHUYLKILL**



**MILL GROVE, NEAR PROTECTORY STATION**  
The house in early manhood of John James Audubon



**FATLANDS, FROM THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER**

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At Roxborough and Ridge, at the side of Grace Lutheran Church, is a stone barn where, after the battle of Germantown, a few British stragglers sought refuge, while near the car barn are two places worth more than a passing glance.

Another spot that interests the student of Revolutionary movements is between the ninth and tenth milestones, where a tablet gives this information:

About three hundred yards northwest of this place were encamped the Indian scouts that were a part of Lafayette's Command.

On the reverse is this record:

On the ground in the rear of this Stone the American troops under Lafayette were encamped from the 18th to the 20th of May, 1778.

The cross-roads village of Harmanville is a center of historic interest. Here is the historic Harman Yerkes house, once a famous inn. Nearby is the home of Hiram Corson, where Dr. Joseph Corson, long famous through all this region as a physician of the old school, had his abode. Then comes the Angel House, so named because of the curious carved block of marble placed between two of the windows in the second story. Here are represented two cherubs, one on each side of a palette, on which they are writing. It has been explained that the artist planned thus to represent the budding industries of the new country.

This carving was one of many imported from Venice by Robert Morris as adornments for his palatial house at Eighth and Chestnut streets, Philadelphia. When financial difficulties overtook him, the unfin-

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ished house was stripped of its adornments. Some were sold and some were taken by workmen in part settlement of their claims. One story is that the builder of the Angel House was a workman on Morris' Folly, while another story is that the carving was bought at a sale of the effects of the great financier and was handed over to the masons when they built this modest stone structure.

The Angel House is of special interest for another reason. On the premises, in the rear, is the old Potts Quarry, from which was taken the stone used by the builders of Independence Hall.

At Spring Mill, near the terminus of the trolley that passes the Angel House, is the old Legaux house. Though many think the house dates from about 1690, it received its name from Peter Legaux, a Frenchman who at one time was Governor of San Domingo. It was his idea when, in 1786, he came to the estate on the banks of the Schuylkill, that the growing of grapes and the making of wine would be profitable. On the two hundred acres in his possession he set out thirty thousand grape vines, the first vineyard of any size in America. To his home amid the vines, which he called Mt. Joy, he welcomed General Washington on many occasions. The house, much altered, is now the home of Harry S. Righter.

In colonial days, and during the Revolution, both banks of the Schuylkill from Spring Mill to Conshohocken, were lined with the farms of sturdy settlers who used to go to Norristown to market. One of these farms, on the west bank, at Swede's Ford, was owned

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by Peter Holstein, a relative of John Hughes, whose farm, Walnut Grove, is mentioned in the chapter on the Gulph Road. In 1785 Levi Bartleson asked Peter's daughter Mary to marry him. Because of his intemperate habits, the father refused to give consent. Soon afterward the father died, leaving his entire estate to his only child.

As soon as Peter died the suitor called at the house and, entering the room where the body lay, remained there a few moments. "When he came out," the story is told, "he remarked in a cheerful, well-satisfied manner, that they would now be married, for he had asked her father, and as silence gives consent there could be no further objection."

Within five years the intemperate man had dissipated the fine estate, and his wife was left in destitute circumstances. For some time she earned her living as a servant in the house where she had been mistress. Then she married a farm hand and moved to Ohio. Some years later the people who had given employment to the destitute wife before her second marriage, while residents of Norristown, saw a man and a woman, quietly dressed, riding handsome horses, passing along Main Street, as the Ridge Road in Norristown was called. To their surprise and pleasure they recognized the unfortunate Mary Bartleson and her farm-hand husband.

The land on which Norristown is built was a part of the Manor lands of William Penn. In 1704 he sold the entire tract, which includes the present Township of Norrington, for £850. Isaac Norris was one of the

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

purchasers. From him the town took its name. At first it was called the Town of Norris. When Montgomery County was cut off from Philadelphia in 1784, Norristown became the county seat. In 1795 there were ten buildings in the town. "In one of these," a traveler said, "the sessions are held; in another the judges reside when they come to hold the assizes; a third is the county jail; three others are inns; the rest are farm-houses, shops or habitations of laborers."

The only road in early Norristown was the old Egypt Road. On some of the old houses in Norristown are still the Egypt Road signs, though this is the present Main Street.

The road was so named because it passed through the section near the mouth of the Perkiomen which was overflowed every year; the deposit of soil made the lands fertile like the overflow lands of Egypt.

The Egypt Road, which may be considered a part of the Ridge Road, has an interesting history. Joseph Richardson, who built at Olethelo on the Schuylkill, near Phoenixville, in a petition dated in 1722 declared "that there is no certain Road laid out from thence towards the city of Philadelphia," and he asked the Court to order a King's Road or Cartway through the various hills and up and down the aforementioned places, to wit, from the India town ford to the next established King's Road that will best suit the inhabitants of Olethelo to the said city of Philadelphia. The petition was granted, and a jury was appointed to lay out the road. Joseph Richardson was made one of

## THE RIDGE ROAD TO PERKIOMEN

the "overseers of ye above road." The work of surveying was done and approved by the court.

But Isaac Norris, who had bought the Manor of Williamstadt, objected to the new road. His ten thousand acres of land he had divided into small lots. The proposed road would cross his Manor and he did not want his land taken for any such purpose. He said that there was no need of a road, since there was another road near; why have a second? Richardson asked him to go over the route and suggest possible changes. On November 8, 1725, Norris met Richardson in the woods. The men were unable to agree, however.

On the 5th of 4th month, 1727, Norris presented a petition to the Court. In this he stated that he was informed a road had been "petitioned to be laid out . . . which runs aslant more than four miles through . . . Wm Stadt, obliquely, cutting the line of the several lots laid out years before in the said Mannor very injuriously." So he pleaded for a reconsideration, but this was denied and the road was built.

If they could speak, two neighboring houses on a byway that leads from Egypt Road would be able to tell a pleasing romance. Opposite a deserted blacksmith shop, on the right, is the gateway to Mill Grove. Some distance farther on, on the left, is the entrance to beautiful Fatlands, so named because the estate included what was known as the "Fat Lands of Egypt."

And this is the romance of these two old homes of early days:

About two hundred years ago there lived in France a poor fisherman named Audubon, who had nineteen

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

daughters and two sons. One of the sons was sent away to make his fortune when he was twelve years of age. His entire patrimony was a shirt, a suit of clothes, a cane, and a blessing. For five years he was a sailor before the mast. Then he bought a boat. He prospered and bought other vessels. After many years he had large wealth, and was trading to the distant quarters of the earth.

When he was an old man he paid a visit to America. In two widely separated places, attracted by the country, he bought land. One estate was on Perkio-men Creek, near Philadelphia; the other was in Louisiana. In Louisiana he spent much of his time; and there, on May 4, 1780, John James Audubon was born.

Commodore Audubon wanted his son to be a seaman, and he took him to France that he might be educated for the navy. But the boy's tastes were in another direction altogether. One of the teachers provided for him was an artist, who gave him lessons in drawing that were intended as a part of his training for the profession the father had chosen for him. But John James put drawing to a use of his own. On his holidays he used to take a lunch and go into the country, and he returned loaded with natural history specimens of all kinds. These he preserved in a cabinet of his own devising, and he made and treasured drawings of many of them.

Commodore Audubon, not pleased with his son's habits, thought he would give him something to do that would distract his mind. The estate in Pennsylvania needed a superintendent, so he sent the would-

## THE RIDGE ROAD TO PERKIOMEN

be naturalist to America, with instructions to look after the estate.

But the wild woods about Philadelphia offered so many opportunities for tramping and nature investigation that the estate was neglected. Along the Perkiomen he could ramble for hours, with his gun or his fishing rod or his collecting instruments. He has left a description of his appearance and ways at this period:

I had no vices, but was thoughtless, pensive, loving, fond of shooting, fishing and riding, and had a passion for raising all sorts of fowls. It was one of my passions to be ridiculously fond of dress; to hunt in black satin breeches, wear pumps when shooting, and dress in the finest ruffled shirts I could obtain from France.

Before long the attic room which he occupied was a treasure house of birds and animals and natural history specimens. He was his own taxidermist. He did his work seated at a window that looks toward the Valley Forge country, where Washington spent the winter of 1777-1778 with his faithful soldiers. The marks of his work are still to be seen on the old boards beneath the window. These boards came from the sawmill on the estate which gave the house its name.

Here in this attic room the young naturalist dreamed of making careful, accurate drawings of all the birds of America. He knew that this would be a difficult matter, but he was not deterred by thoughts of hardship and poverty.

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One who viewed his attic room told of what he saw:

I was astonished and delighted to find that it was turned into a museum. The walls were festooned with all sorts of birds' eggs, carefully blown and strung on a thread. The chimney piece was covered with stuffed squirrels, raccoons and opossums, and the shelves around were likewise crowded with specimens, among which were fish, frogs, snakes, lizards and other reptiles.

While he was dreaming of what he would do for the world, something was happening in London that was to have an effect on his life. William Bakewell, one of the Sheriffs of London, refused to be silent about a matter that George III felt should be forgotten; he was a conscientious man, and he did not feel that silence would be proper. The king rebuked him, and he resigned his office. At once he made up his mind to leave England and make a home in America, taking with him his wife, his two sons and his daughter.

After many investigations, he found an estate near Philadelphia that pleased him—Fatlands, on the Schuylkill, near the Perkiomen; there he went in January, 1804. The original mansion house at Fatlands was built by James Vaux in 1774. There the English immigrant made his home.

Of course Audubon heard of the coming of the strangers to the house across the road, not half a mile from his own quarters. But he did not go to call on them. He was French and they were English; he felt sure they would be undesirable acquaintances, and



**FATLANDS, NEAR PROTECTORY STATION, FROM THE ROAD**  
Where John James Audubon found his bride



HOUSE OF JOHN PRICE WETHERILL, SENIOR, NEAR PROTECTORY STATION

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that he had better keep to the woods and follow his own pursuits, without reference to others. Even when, on his return from a hunting expedition, he learned that Mr. Bakewell and his daughter had called at Mill Grove, he was reluctant to make a return visit.

There came a winter day when Audubon was following some grouse down the creek. Suddenly he came upon Mr. Bakewell. The naturalist's prejudices were dissipated by the discovery that the Englishman had kindred tastes. "I was struck with the kind politeness of his manners," Audubon wrote later. "I found him a most expert marksman, and entered into conversation. I admired the beauty of his well-trained dogs, and finally promised to call on himself and his family. Well do I recollect the morning, and it please God may I never forget it, when, for the first time, I entered the Bakewell household. It happened that Mr. Bakewell was from home. I was shown into a parlor, where only a young lady was seated at work, with her back turned towards the fire. She rose on my entrance, offered me a seat, and assured me of the gratification her father would feel on his return, which, she added with a smile, would be in a few minutes, as she would send a servant after him. . . . The young lady made the time pass pleasantly enough, and to me especially so. It was she, my dear Lucy Bakewell, who afterward became my wife and the mother of my children."

After Mr. Bakewell's return "Lucy rose from her seat," Audubon wrote on, "and her face, to which I had before paid little attention, seemed radiant with beauty,

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

and my heart and eyes followed her everywhere. The repast being over, guns and dogs were provided, and as we left I was pleased to believe that Lucy looked upon me as a not very strange animal. Bowing to her, I felt, I knew not why, that I was not indifferent to her."

Before long the lovers devised a method of communication between Mill Grove and Fatlands, by means of a series of signals, chalked on a board and hung out of the window. On every possible occasion the young people were together. Lucy Bakewell taught English to Audubon, and the young naturalist taught her to love.

Lucy's brother William became Audubon's companion on his expeditions in the forest and on the creek. Once, when they were shooting, Audubon wagered that he could put a shot through his cap tossed in the air while he was passing it at full speed. The wager was won; the cap was riddled.

On one of these expeditions the naturalist nearly lost his life. While pursuing a flock of wild geese, he plunged into an air hole in the ice and was swept down stream. Fortunately, he came up at another air hole and was dragged out by his companions. He was taken to Fatlands, where he was put to bed. It was three months before he was able to return to Mill Grove.

The dream of the lovers was interrupted by the coming of an overseer named Da Costa, whom the senior Audubon had sent from France to look after the lead mines at Mill Grove. He assumed authority over

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young Audubon, attempted to limit his finances, and made objections to his marriage, on the ground that Lucy Bakewell was beneath him. Audubon resisted and demanded money to go to France, that he might appeal to his father. Da Costa thereupon sent him to New York with a letter of credit. The season was midwinter, but Audubon walked to New York in three days. There he was informed not only that there was no money for him, but that Da Costa had suggested that he be seized and shipped to India. From a friend he procured money and went to France. There he secured the removal of Da Costa, and told of his engagement. His father wrote to Mr. Bakewell, and was delighted to learn that he belonged to the family of the Peverils, landowners in Derbyshire, famous because Sir Walter Scott made one of the name the hero of "Peveril of the Peak."

At length, after Mill Grove had been settled on Audubon by his father, he sold the property, and on April 8, 1808, he was married to Lucy Bakewell. Then they began the long wanderings in the West and the South, the fruit of which was what has been called one of the most wonderful ornithological treatises ever made.

Mr. and Mrs. Audubon floated down the Ohio River, spent a season in Kentucky and Missouri, had narrow escapes from the Indians, and finally found their way to Louisiana. There for a time the wife supported herself by teaching at the home of a planter. Friends and acquaintances thought the husband was a madman to continue his quest of the birds when his family was in straitened circumstances. But Mrs.

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Audubon believed in him, and urged him to go to Europe and study painting in oils, that he might be better equipped for the preparation of his bird plates. She secured a good situation as teacher at Bayou Sara, and was soon enjoying an income of three thousand dollars a year.

Finally, with some of his own savings, as well as some of his wife's funds, Audubon went to England, where he was well received. Plans were made to publish the bird plates, with descriptive matter, at \$1,000 per set. He had to have a hundred advance subscribers. These he secured by personal solicitation.

At last the work was issued. Cuvier called it "the most magnificent work that art ever raised to ornithology."

Many years later Audubon, after the death of his wife, returned to the scenes of his early life as a naturalist. "Here is where I met my dear Lucy," he said with glistening eyes, as he looked into one of the rooms of the old mansion.

Between the Quaker meeting house and the entrance to Fatlands, in the edge of the wood, jutting stones in the wall show the beginning of a path that leads to the Bakewell burial lot. Here lies the body of Lucy Bakewell's mother, who died in September, 1804, after pining for months for her English home. On the stone are these lines:

A lovely form, a soul devoid of art,  
With all the kind affections of the heart;  
A tender mother and a faithful wife,  
In duty's sacred path she moved through life.

## THE RIDGE ROAD TO PERKIOMEN

Though husband, children, friends implored her stay  
He who bestows hath right to take away.  
In humble faith this hope we keep in view  
The pow'r that formed us will our lives renew.

In the same grave is the body of her husband. Timothy Matlack, secretary of the Constitutional Congress, is also buried in the lot, together with one hundred and fifty Free Quakers.

Not far from this burial ground, on the bank of the Schuylkill, General Sullivan built a pontoon bridge; at the direction of General Washington, that he might have free access from Valley Forge to the north bank of the river. When the American army left Valley Forge in 1778, the soldiers used this bridge and passed near the house, and on to Egypt Road.

In 1804, Robert Sutcliffe wrote of Vaux Hall, afterward Fatlands:

I paid a visit to a relative above Norristown. This plantation consists of 300 acres of land. On the estate is a well-finished square stone house, about fifteen yards in length, with a wide boarded-floor piazza both in back and front. . . . In these piazzas they frequently take tea and spend the evenings. Beside the dwelling-house, there is an excellent kitchen, and offices adjoining; with a large barn, and stables sufficient to accommodate 40 horses and cows; all well built of stone. The estate extends the whole breadth between the Schuylkill and Perkioming. . . . The house is so situated that it commands one of the finest prospects in Pennsylvania. . . . The whole together forms one of the most beautiful spots I have seen in the United States. The estate, with all its appendages, cost about 3100£ sterling, which is but 12£ per acre, the buildings included.

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The plantation was formerly in the possession of a friend from London, of the name of Vaux, who built the house and made the improvements upon it. When he resided here with his family, during the American war, being in full view of the great American encampment at Valley Forge, and on the opposite side of the river Schuylkill, he had frequently the company of General Howe, and the other British commanders. One day it happened that he had Howe to breakfast and Washington to tea; and being a friend who wished well to all men, he made no distinction between the contending parties, but left his house open to all. This was the general practice of friends during the war.

The estate was advertised for sale, August 7, 1813, thus:

Contains upward of 200 acres, one-third very good woodland. House 45 by 35, stone, with piazza on each side, a two story kitchen and wash-house, adjoining a large stone barn with Stable for 40 head and horses and cattle, two tenements, a threshing-mill, which threshes 12 bushels of barley in an hour.

Stone hog-house 56 feet long, a stone building for sheep 90 feet long, with 2 wings 30 feet each and ice house. On the Schuylkill is a shad fishery. This farm for healthiness and fertility is not exceeded by any other in Pennsylvania. Is admirably adapted for keeping sheep, having kept between 2 and 300 near 10 years, without having lost any by dogs. If not sold before the 24th of Sept. it will be sold at public vendue, together with about 200 sheep of the English Morena breeds, span of oxen and other cattle, 4 asses, 7 horses, a drilling machine, a large 3 furrow plow, 2 wagons, 2 carts, a large roller, above 30 pigs of the English Berkshire breed.

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In 1825 the estate came into the Wetherill family. In 1843 William Wetherill rebuilt the house on the original foundations. To-day it is the property of Dr. Wetherill.

Mill Grove is an older estate than Fatlands. The house was built in 1762 by James Morgan. In 1813, five years after the marriage of Audubon, it was bought by Samuel Wetherill, the grandfather of the present owner, W. H. Wetherill, because of the lead mines on the place. The mines date back to the days of William Penn. Mr. Wetherill was the founder of the firm of Samuel Wetherill & Son, the oldest white lead manufacturers in America, whose first factory stood on the site of the present Girard Trust Company's building, at Broad and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia. For many years lead had been imported from England, but when the War of 1812 prevented further importation, the manufacturers looked about them for a source of supply nearer home. Learning of the Mill Grove Mines Farm, where he had heard that supplies were obtained during the Revolution, the place was bought and the mine was developed. Operations continued till the discovery of great deposits in the West, which made the product of the mine in the neighborhood of Philadelphia too insignificant for comparison.

The farm took its name not only from the mine, but also from the grist mill, remains of which can still be seen in a field across the lane leading to the house. It is said that this mill ground more grain for Washington's army than any other mill in the neighborhood,

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not even excepting the Valley Forge mill. This mill was old in the days of Audubon.

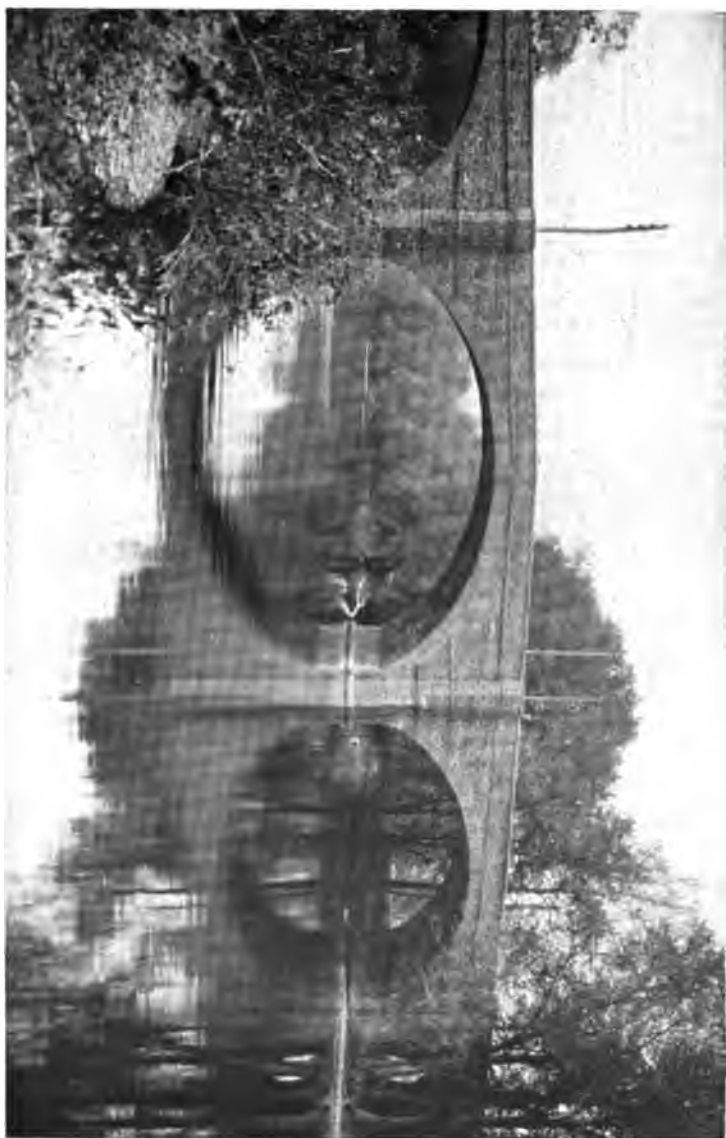
A paper in the library at Mill Grove gives a list of the twenty men and women who have owned the farm since it passed from the hands of William Penn in 1699.

Still another landmark is half a mile beyond Fatlands. A lane leads through the woods to the picturesque old home of John Price Wetherill, Sr. This cannot be seen from the road; it is hidden in a hollow amid the trees.

In early days, in the vicinity of this estate, on the Schuylkill, was one of the pens for catching shad into which as many as 8,500 fish were driven at one time. Such pens, with the "dams, weirs and Kedles" that abounded, caused so much trouble that they were made illegal by the Act of August 15, 1730. But the law was evaded. A record of 1732 tells of the complaint of one who was aggrieved by reason of the failure of the law to correct the abuse:

Marcus Huling saith that as he was going down the Schuylkill with a Canoe Loaded with wheat, that striking on a fish dam, she took in a great deal of water into ye wheat, by means of which his wheat was much damnified, and that it was in great danger of being all lost, and that at another time he strok fast on a fish dam, and should have lost his whole Load of Wheat, if he had not leaped into ye river, and with hard Labor, prevented ye Canoe from Swinging rount, and he suffered very much in his body by reason of ye water and cold.

In 1738 the farmers who lived above these weirs and pens resolved that they could not consent to be



OLD BRIDGE OVER THE PERKIOMEN, 1798



**INTERIOR OF A COVERED TURNPIKE BRIDGE**



**UMSTAD MANOR, 1785, NEAR OAKS STATION**  
**The home of Mr. Francis V. Eavenson**

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deprived any longer of the shad they felt were their due. They therefore organized a canoe expedition and floated down stream, intent on destroying the structures. The fishermen defended their property and drove off the invaders. When the men took refuge in Perkiomen Creek, their canoe grounded, and they were compelled to flee into the forest. The pursuers destroyed the navy of the invaders and returned in triumph to the enjoyment of their shad.

Near Perkiomen Creek, on the Egypt Road, are the ruins of the smelter and shaft of the first copper mine in America, while beyond the Perkiomen, on the banks of the Schuylkill, is Umstad Manor, the home of Francis V. Eavenson. Henry Pawling bought the ground from the Penn Estate in 1706. The place was sold to Jonas Umstad, the ancestor of Mrs. Eavenson, in 1768. Thus for nearly one hundred and fifty years the estate has been in the Umstad family. The manor was built in 1785. The present house is the old house remodeled.

The last bit of the Ridge Road may be traversed by trolley from Jeffersonville. At Mt. Kirk the trolley turns to the left to avoid the hill, for the track was laid in the early days of electric roads, when builders avoided hills whenever possible. But the hill should be climbed, for on the summit is Providence Presbyterian Church, twenty miles from Philadelphia, founded in 1730. In the picturesque cemetery above the church an hour may easily be spent.

A curious stone near the road attracts attention. This was erected to the memory of a victim of the

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Johnstown flood, who gave his life in the effort to save his sister; both were passengers on a train caught by the water. Beneath the inscription is carved a Pullman car, while a resistless wall of water carrying buildings and train is fairly well represented.

On the stone of Captain John Hamilton, 1779, are these lines:

Were I so tall to reach the Pole  
Or grasp the Ocean with my Span,  
I must be measured by my Soul,  
The Mind's the Standard of the Man.

Those who mourned for Henry Hamilton, the victim of a shooting affray in 1763, said of him:

The blooming youth whose soul in bliss we trust  
A highway RUFFIN quick reduced to dust  
By one sore Stroke, which pierced the parents' heart  
Cold death asunder dearest friends can part.  
But we'll submit May God forgive the crime  
Who wisely rule the hardest fate of time.

Near by lies the body of Joseph Crawford, Sr., who helped row Washington over the Delaware.

One of the most interesting stones marks the grave of Rev. John Campbell. In 1753, while in Providence pulpit, he was reading the fifteenth verse of the one hundred and sixteenth Psalm,

"Dear in thy sight is thy saints' death;  
Thy servant, Lord, am I"—

when he was stricken with paralysis. His friend, President Davies of Princeton, prepared the inscription for his tomb, which was here used for the first time, though it has been copied often since:

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In yonder sacred house I spent my Breath,  
Now silent sleeping here I lie in Death.  
These silent lips shall wake, and yet declare  
A dread Amen to Truth they published there.

On a high hill beyond Mt. Kirk, twenty-one miles from Philadelphia, a sign gives the information:

You can see 7 Counties from here.  
Look north and see Allentown.  
Look west and see Neversink Mountain.  
Look east and see William Penn's Hat,  
Look south and see Valley Forge Mills.

Several miles farther on the Ridge joins the Germantown Road just before the sturdy stone bridge over the Perkiomen is crossed. A tablet on the right wall tells its story:

This bridge was founded in the year of our Lord 1798 & finished in 1799.

The six-arch bridge was modeled after a bridge over the Seine in France. It has resisted great floods and the impact of tremendous ice jams, and it is as staunch as when it was built by the conscientious "Undertaker of Masonry" nearly a hundred and twenty years ago.

## VIII

### THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

**I**N 1683, when the first immigrants sought to go to what is now Germantown to make their new home, it is probable that they made their way along a well-defined path that followed much the same route as the present Germantown Road. In fact, the explanation has been given that the Germantown Road of to-day owes its strange windings to the habit of the Indian to choose the easiest way, even if this was a crooked way.

These immigrants from Crefeld, in Germany, settled on lands secured for them by Francis Daniel Pastorius and allotted to them in Pastorius' cave house. They planned to make their living by farming, but they did not propose to be far from one another; for companionship as well as protection they built their first quaint houses in two rows, one on either side of the rough track. By day they would scatter to the lands in the rear of the houses; by night they would be in close touch with each other. This arrangement, so popular in the homeland, had even greater advantages in the new country. Early maps of Philadelphia and its vicinity show the construction of the village after this manner, and early travelers noted it.

Gradually the early track from Philadelphia became a road. Pastorius wrote once: "The path to German-

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

town has by frequent going to and fro been so strongly beaten that a road has been formed."

Not many years passed before the residents of Germantown decided that they must have some better avenue of approach to Philadelphia than the rough track. So, in March, 1709, certain men who described themselves as residents of the county of Philadelphia presented to the Assembly a paper that read:

The Peticon of John Spreogle and Mons Jones in behalf of themselves and Divers other freeholders of the s<sup>d</sup> county of Philadelphia, Humbly Sheweth That your Peticoners Haveing Plantacons lying Very Remote in the Country and In the Edge or Outskirts of this County, And It being Very Difficult for them to pass and Repass unto their Said Plantacons by Reason there is No Publick Road Laid out far Enough to Reach to the said Plantacons.

Yoer Peticoners, Therefore pray this Court Would be pleased to Order Six Housekeepers of the Neighborhood to view and Allot Some Convenient Plan for Laying Out A Road from the Late House of Edward Lane Deceased being on the Queen's Highway unto Mannitania. According to An Act of Assembly in that case Made and Provided.

And your Peticoners shall pray.

This curious document was signed by fourteen men, of whom five made their mark.

The following action was taken by the Assembly:

Order'd that Mouns Jones Walter Thomson Matthew Brook Andrew Lycon John Justus and James Brook or some four of 'em do lay out the sd Road and report next Sess.

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One reason the new road was needed was that the product of the paper mill of William Rightinghuisen, built in 1690, might have better access to Philadelphia. For twenty years he had managed somehow to get his paper to market, but better facilities were needed. Then there were other manufactured products which the thrifty Germantowners desired to send to the town on the Delaware.

Part of a curious poem, written by Richard Fraeme, one of the early settlers of Philadelphia, tells of these primitive industries. He called it "A short description of Pensilvania; or a Relation of what Things are Known, Enjoyed and like to be Discovered in said Province." This was printed in 1692:

The German-Town, of which I spoke before,  
Which is, at least, in length one mile or more,  
Where lives High-German People, and Low Dutch,  
Whose Trade in Weaving Linen Cloth is Much.  
There grows the Flax, as also you may know,  
That from the same they do divide the Tow;  
Their trade fits well within their Habitation,  
We find Convenience for the Occasion:  
One Trade brings in Imployment for another,  
So that we may suppose each Trade a Brother;  
From Linen Rags good Paper doth derive,  
The first Trade keepeth the second Trade Alive;  
Without the first, the second cannot be,  
Therefore since these Two can so well agree,  
Convenience doth appear to place them nigh,  
One in Germantown, t'other hard by,  
A Paper Mill near German Town doth stand,  
So that the Flax, which first springs from the Land,  
First Flax, then Yarn, and then they must begin  
To weave the same, which they took pains to spin.

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

Also, when on our back it is well worn,  
Some of the same remains, Ragged and Torn;  
Then of the Rags our Paper it is made,  
Which in process of time doth waste and fade:  
So what comes from the earth, appeareth plain,  
The same in time returns to Earth again.

A poem written six years later by Judge Holme referred to the departure of William Bradford, printer, to New York, after making an agreement with Mr. Rittenhouse that he was to have, if he wished, the entire product of what was at the time the only paper mill in America. This early monopolist made such demands on the mill that the owner frequently longed for a better road to the city.

Here is a part of Judge Holme's literary gem:

Here dwelt a printer and I find  
That he can both print books and bind;  
He wants not paper, ink nor skill  
He's owner of a paper mill.  
The paper mill is here hard by  
And makes good paper frequently;  
But the printer, as I do here tell,  
Is gone into New York to dwell.  
No doubt but he will lay up bags  
If he can get good store of rags.  
Kind friend, when thy old shift is rent,  
Let it to th' paper mill be sent.

That the road asked for by the "Peticoners" who had to make their marks was built and became a great thoroughfare is evident from a reference in the account of the travels of Governor Thomas Pownall, in 1754. After telling of the Lancaster road, to Harris' Ferry

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

(Harrisburg) he told of "another great road, which goes from Philadelphia to the same ferry, but keeps on the N. E. side of the Schuylkill, and runs through Germantown, &c. to Reading."

As population increased there was demand for something better than the dirt road which, at certain seasons, was impassable. A picture of the trying conditions is given by Scharf & Westcott:

The travel between the city and that borough (Germantown) became so great that heavy ruts were cut in the highway, which became a slough of mire in wet weather. In the spring of the year, especially, the way was only possible with the greatest difficulty. Wagons were buried, stalled, and broken. Horses were sprained and weakened by the extraordinary efforts to drag their loads; and such was the bad character of the roads that practically, at certain periods of the year, there was non-intercourse between Philadelphia and Germantown.

In these early days it was the custom at some points to cut the cedar trees that grew at the side of the road and put them under the mired horses. Many a team was saved in this way. Years later, when excavations were made in the avenue, some of these cedar trunks, well preserved, were found at depths of fifteen and even twenty feet.

In April, 1793, a petition was presented for a turnpike road from Chestnut Hill, through Germantown to Philadelphia. A committee reported in favor of building the road to the tenth milestone. But there were objections from those who were opposed to what they called "special legislation," and the project was abandoned for the time.

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

In 1801 petitioners had better success, for on February 12 of that year there was approval of "an act to enable the Governor of the Commonwealth to incorporate a company for making an artificial road from the city of Philadelphia through Germantown, to the ten mile stone on Chestnut Hill, and from thence to the new stone bridge on Perkiomen creek in the county of Montgomery."

A graphic list of the vehicles found on the public road at that time, as well as a hint that the users of the road were much like the travelers of later days, is given in the provision of the act, "that any person or persons whomsoever owning, riding on, or driving a sulky, chair, chaise, phaeton, cart, waggon, wain, sleigh, sled, or other carriage of burthen, pleasure, or owning, riding, leading or driving any horse, mare, gelding, hogs, sheep or other cattle, shall therewith pass through any private gate or bars, or along or over any private passage, way, or other ground, near to or adjoining any turnpike or gate erected, with an intent to defraud the company and avoid the payment of the toll or duty . . . shall pay a fine of ten dollars."

The next step came in March, 1802, when "The President, Managers, and Company of the Germantown and Reading Turnpike Road" were incorporated to build a road through Germantown to the top of Chestnut Hill and thence through Hickorytown, the Trappe and Pottstown to Reading.

It was provided that the income from tolls above nine per cent. should be invested in a fund to pay off the shares of the Company, that the road might

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

become free. But it was not until 1874 that the toll collectors ceased to worry those who used the road.

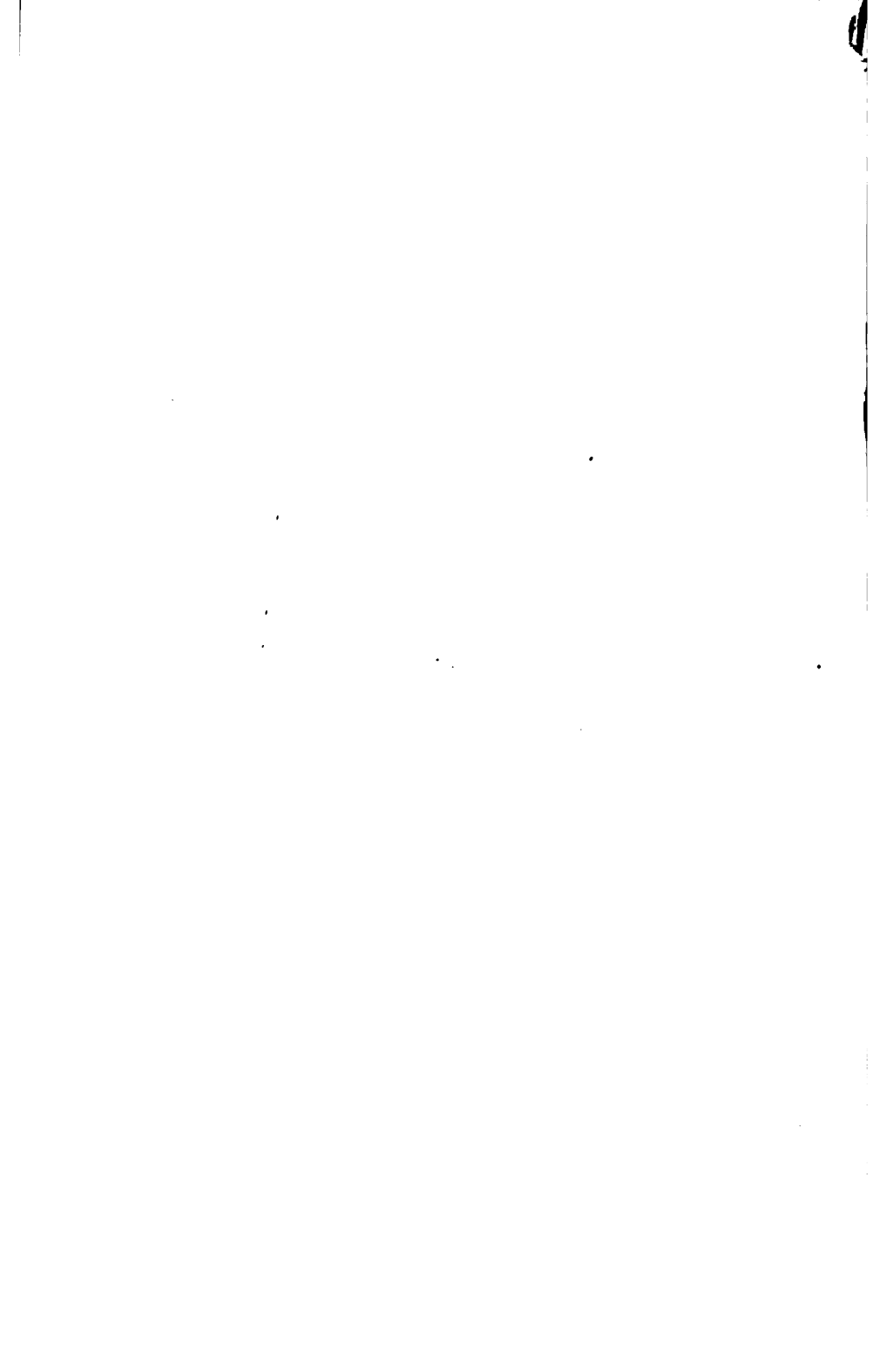
Milestones were carefully placed along the road, and many of these may still be seen. Of one of the stones an old resident of Germantown some years ago told this story:

The old milestone standing on Germantown avenue below Armat street in years gone by was a sort of social, political and sporting centre in Germantown, just as the town pump is in rural villages. A queer thing about it is that originally it was the sixth milestone on Germantown road, but now the inscription reads "5 miles to Phila." The explanation given is that about 1840 the figures were changed because the city was growing toward Germantown. From this stone exciting fox chases used to start in the old times, the popular route being down through the Wingohocking Valley to Fisher's Hollow, then across to the York road and on to Haines street, returning thence to Germantown. It was on one of these chases that a disastrous ending came to the love affair of a youth named MacKenzie. He and another youth were both suitors for the hand of Nancy M., an ardent follower of the chase. A group of fox-hunters were about to "take" the creek in Fisher's Hollow one day when young MacKenzie's horse stumbled and the rider was thrown into the water. When he emerged he presented such a ludicrous appearance that the young woman, who was in the party, laughed outright. This so abashed MacKenzie that he never again could summon up enough courage to plead his cause, and the other fellow married the girl.

Soon after Wayne Junction is passed the old houses of Germantown appear one after another in quick succession. Between the 4500 block and the 6900 block



THE HOUSE OF FRANCIS DANIEL PASTORIUS, FOUNDER OF GERMANTOWN,  
6019 MAIN STREET



## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

there are more than fifty houses of special interest, while on the cross streets there are a number of others. In early days there were not many of these cross streets, however, so most of the historic houses are on the Main Street.

For this section of the old Germantown Road, at least an afternoon is necessary even for a passing view of the points of special interest. An invaluable handbook for the investigator is "Historic Germantown," prepared for the Sites and Relic Society of the quaint old town.

Special note should be made of the Toland house, 4810 Main Street, built in 1740, at the time of the Battle of Germantown the home of George Miller, an officer in the American army, whose wife was forced to bake bread for the British officers; the Ottinger house, 4825 Main Street, the birthplace of Captain Douglas Ottinger, the inventor of the Ottinger Life Car, with which many life-saving stations have been equipped; and the Wagner house, 4840 Main Street, on whose floors bloodstains testify to its use as a hospital by the British.

In the 4900 block, opposite the Henry house, which dates from 1760, is the old Lower Germantown Burial Ground, whose curious gravestones will repay study. An inscription that compels most readers to smile says of the young man buried there:

He was noble hearted & amiable &  
Intelligent, having been awarded  
A silver goblet for a literary  
Production at the age of 18.

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Gilbert Stuart, the famous portrait artist, to whom Washington sat, lived at 5140 Main Street from 1798 to 1800. His studio was in a barn in the rear of the house. In this barn Washington sat for the portrait now owned by the Athenæum of Boston.

5219 Main Street is of special interest to the student of the old roads, for here were made some of the first Germantown wagons. Here, in 1780, John Bringham built a chariot, for which George Washington paid £210 in gold. One of the specifications for this chariot was that it have the Washington arms and crest "properly disp'd of" on the doors.

5253 Main Street is the site of the home and printing house of Christopher Sauer, who came to Philadelphia in 1724. In 1731 he built here a mansion with movable partitions, which he used both as a hospital and as a place for religious worship. It was his custom, when a vessel arrived from Germany, to take vehicles, and go to the landing for sick passengers, whom he would take to his house, caring for them until they were able to earn their own living.

Sauer was a pharmacist, but when he noted how difficult it was to obtain German books, he secured in 1738 printing materials from Germany. In 1739 he published an almanac, a volume of hymns and a newspaper, which gained a circulation of four thousand copies. It is said that it was a common sight to see a long line of Conestoga wagons standing before his house, waiting for books and medical supplies to be carried to Philadelphia and other places.

In 1743 he printed a German quarto Bible, the first

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

Bible in a European language printed in America. He cast his own type and made his own ink. Before many years he was the publisher of more than two hundred books.

In 1752 his son Christopher began to take an active part both in the printing office and in the pharmacy, and in 1758 he succeeded to the business. From his press were issued two editions of the Bible.

The Wister house, 5261 Main Street, which dates from 1744, was the home of Sally Wister, who wrote the famous diary that gave so many intimate glimpses of people and events during the days of the British occupation of Philadelphia. The vivacious chronicle was prepared at the Foulke house, Penllyn, on the Wissahickon, where the author had retired with friends while the British were in the neighborhood.

5425 Main Street is notable because it is the site of the house in which Louisa May Alcott was born, during her father's brief residence in Germantown.

Market Square is a spot of special interest. This was long the center of Germantown business life. The market house was here, as well as the house of one of the earliest fire companies, and it was the site of the prison, the stocks and the pound.

At 5442 Main Street is the Morris house, where Washington lived during the yellow fever epidemic of 1793 and during the summer of 1794. Watson's Annals says that during these periods he was "a frequent walker abroad up the Main Street, and daily rode out on horseback or in his phaeton." Probably some of the people who received his affable greetings thought with regret that at one time it looked as if

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Germantown might have been the permanent capital of the United States. In 1789, when one house of Congress fixed on the Falls of the Susquehanna as the site of the capital, the Senate amended the proposal by suggesting Germantown. The next year, however, the site on the Potomac was named, and Congress began to provide for the building of the "palace in the woods."

One of the striking features of this locality is the Market Square Presbyterian Church, an organization which dates from the days of Pastorius, the founder of Germantown. In the ship on which he came to Philadelphia were people of many sorts. To his parents he wrote:

The religious beliefs of the foreigners, and Vocations were so varied that the ship might be compared to Noah's ark. I brought with me four men servants, two woman servants, two children and an apprentice. Among these were adherents of the Romish, the Lutheran, the Calvinistic (Reformed), the Anabaptist, and the English churches, and only one Quaker.

In 1686 Pastorius built a small church for the use of all the people. In 1732 land was bought in the Square for a Reformed church, and during the following year a house of worship was built there. In 1738 a traveler from Holland wrote home: "At Germantown there is a fine church, but a miserable minister, a Quaker, indeed." Three years later Count Zinzendorf came to Philadelphia and preached in the church.

The present church building is the third erected on the site. The congregation that worships here has been Presbyterian since 1856.

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

Many relics are preserved in the church, among these being the original bell, cast in 1725, and the metal weather vane, which bears the marks of bullets. One of the treasured memories of the church is that Washington frequently attended service here during his residence in Germantown.

Six squares farther on, at 6019 Main Street, is the Green Tree Tavern, built in 1748 by Daniel and Sarah Pastorius. Here in early days driving and sleighing parties used to come for the meals which made the hostelry famous. To-day the building is used by the First Methodist Church of Germantown for society meetings and similar gatherings.

At the corner of Walnut Lane and Main Street is Wyck, the oldest house in Germantown. This is especially interesting because it has undergone scarcely any change. It is really two houses joined together; the first of these dates from 1690.

The Chew house, at the corner of Johnson Street, was at the central point of the Battle of Germantown. Behind the walls of this house some of the British soldiers barricaded themselves, and the Americans were unable to drive them out, even after a fierce siege, whose marks may still be seen by the visitor.

The burying ground of St. Michael's Lutheran Church, at Phil-Ellena Street, is the last resting place of the bodies of many of the famous men of early Pennsylvania. One of these was Christopher Ludwig, on whose stone is the legend:

He was born at Giessen in Hesse D'Armstadt in Germany, and learned the Baker's Trade and business

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

. . . in the year 1775, he came and settled in Philadelphia, and by his industry at his trade and business acquired a handsome competency, part of which he devoted to the service of his adopted country in the Contest for the independence of America; was appointed Baker General to the Army, and for faithful services received a written Testimony from the Commander in Chief, George Washington . . . Reader, such was Ludwig. Art thou poor, venerate his character. Art thou rich, Imitate his example."

When Christopher Ludwig was appointed by Congress, it was proposed that for every pound of flour given to him he should furnish the army with a pound of bread. "No, gentlemen," said he, "I will not accept of your commission upon any such terms. I do not wish to grow rich by the war: I have money enough. I will furnish one hundred and thirty-five pounds of bread for every one hundred pounds of flour you put into my hands."

Half a mile from the Chestnut Hill station of the Pennsylvania Railroad the Germantown Road passes for the first time into the open country.

Just after passing the tenth milestone is the entrance to the Whitemarsh Valley Country Club, whose members do not know whether to be prouder of the fact that the golf course is 6,149 yards long, or of the knowledge that the views secured from the golf course are among the finest to be found on any club grounds anywhere. The club house was built in 1764, and, fortunately, it has not been essentially changed.

Until within a year or two a house near the twelfth milestone reminded passing travelers of Robert Morris,



THE WHITEMARSH VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB, 1764, NEAR BARREN HILL.



**THE REX HOUSE, CHESTNUT HILL**



**THOMAS HOVENDEN'S STUDIO AT PLYMOUTH MEETING**  
Here "Breaking Home Ties" was painted

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

the Revolutionary financier on whom Washington and Congress depended for funds. With remarkable self-effacement and marvelous success he raised the needed money when it seemed that there was no possible way to do this, pledging his own credit, enduring hardship, bearing without complaint the misconceptions of his countrymen, some of whom thought him anything but a patriot. After the Revolution he began to build on Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, the marble palace destined never to be completed, to which the name Morris' Folly was given. His fortune was lost in land speculations, and he spent weary months in a debtors' prison. Many of the marble adornments of the house became part of the furnishings of other houses in and near the city. The owner of the house between the quarry and Plymouth Meeting secured possession of an exquisite marble lion, and this was placed triumphantly between the front door and the gate. For many decades this was treasured and admired. Then came tenants who did not appreciate the relic. Finally one occupant of the house decided that the lion would be improved by a coat of whitewash. No wonder that some descendant of the original owner rescued it from the low estate to which it had fallen, and carted it away to adorn a home where the marks of time are considered more fitting than whitewash. The foundation on which the lion stood for a century may still be traced in the grass before the door.

At Plymouth Meeting is a house before which the traveler feels like baring his head—the home of Thomas Hovenden, the lamented artist. Here he made his home after receiving his training in Paris, and here,

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

in the picturesque studio at the rear of the house, he painted the picture "Breaking Home Ties." Visitors to the World's Fair at Chicago recall what a sensation was caused by this painting, and how every day people crowded about the canvas. It has been said that this is the most popular picture ever painted in America.

The picture was finished in 1890. Four years later, in answer to an inquirer who wished to know how he came to paint it, he wrote:

The idea was with me for several years before I commenced to paint it. I had in my mind the mother; that was almost the picture to me. I think I have succeeded pretty well in giving my idea of her—the human mother—as I have seen her in the country. I have been fortunate in seeing very many noble mothers, and my idea of them was what I tried to convey in the picture. I did think that to many a young man the picture could do nothing but good.

In 1895 he was at work on "The Founding of the State." On August 14 he left his studio to go to Norristown. Within sight of his own door he saw a little girl run in front of an approaching freight train. Thinking only of the child and of the parents to whom the child meant so much, he jumped to the track and grasped her. Both lives were lost. The artist was buried in the Orthodox section of Plymouth Meeting burying ground, just across the way.

A little distance beyond the meeting house the road passes under the railroad tracks, which have been elevated since the accident that cost the life of the artist.

After passing Hickorytown the trolley leaves the turnpike on the left and goes past the Plymouth Coun-

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

try Club, where Norristown residents delight to gather. Not far from the club house is an old butternut tree on which, so it is said, a British spy was hanged during the Revolution.

Near the nineteenth milestone is a house that was long the home of David Rittenhouse, the astronomer. He was born in the house built in 1707 by his grandfather, near the junction of Rittenhouse Street and Lincoln Drive in Germantown, not far from the site of the first paper mill in America, on Paper Mill Run, but he removed to the Germantown Road property when a boy. The house is partially hidden behind gnarled old trees and a great boxwood bush, the slip for which is said to have been brought from England by Benjamin Franklin.

Franklin was a frequent visitor here, for he found a kindred spirit in the thoughtful Rittenhouse, who was never so happy as when he was making clocks or devising astronomical instruments or taking observations of the heavens. Here the transit of Venus was observed on June 3, 1769, and here the two philosophers must have had many a talk about the things which they dreamed of discovering and devising for the good of their fellows in the colonies.

The date stone on the right portion of the house bears the legend:

R  
ME  
1749

The letters stand for Rittenhouse, Matthias and Elizabeth.

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Interest centers about the older rooms. The original boards are in the floors, and the two stairways are just as they were when Franklin visited Rittenhouse. These stairways are side by side, separated only by a partition. The rear stair leads to the kitchen, one side of which is taken up by the wonderful old chimney, in which still hang the chain and hooks used in preparing the meals so long ago.

The day came when William Rittenhouse was to be President of the Philosophical Society, Treasurer of Pennsylvania, and Director of the Mint.

Perhaps his greatest service was rendered in 1763-67, for Mason and Dixon, who were sent from England to run a line between Delaware and Maryland, that disputes as to the boundaries might be settled. He was engaged to help them. His knowledge of astronomy enabled them to transfer the line from the map to the ground. The problem of greatest difficulty was the determination of the arc of the circle centering at New Castle, the first line of the kind ever run. This is the northern boundary of Delaware. One of the lines run at this time became known as the Mason and Dixon line. Later he made an orrery, an ingenious mechanical contrivance by which he illustrated the movements of the heavenly bodies. There was keen rivalry between the University of Pennsylvania and the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) for its possession. At length it went to Princeton, where it is still treasured.

Perhaps it was while on his way along the Germantown Road to the home of Rittenhouse that Franklin had the encounter of which Bernard tells:



**NORRITON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 1698**  
Near the nineteenth milestone



**WHERE DAVID RITTENHOUSE LIVED**  
Near the nineteenth milestone. From the lawn, in 1769, Rittenhouse and Franklin observed the transit of Venus



**THE OLD TRAPPE CHURCH**  
**Begun by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg in 1712**



**THE PULPIT AND CORNER OF GALLERY, OLD TRAPPE CHURCH**

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

When riding out one day he passed a farmer sitting listlessly by the roadside, his chin on his hand and his elbow on his knee. Taking this to be a very reprehensible fit of laziness, he drew rein to expostulate, but the first glance at the rustic's face excited his pitying interest. Inquiring into his circumstances, he heard a sad history of failures in regard to land, implements, and live stock. The details convinced the Doctor of the man's industry, but seemed to throw doubt on his knowledge. "Have you read any of my books, my friend?" said he. "I am Dr. Franklin." At the name the man looked up eagerly, but the next moment relapsed into his former apathy, as if completely heart-broken. "Oh, yes, Doctor," he replied, "I've read your Almanacs—I've worked by 'em, and slept upon 'em, I and my wife and all my boys. But I don't see the good of it; none of your sayings have come true." "No?" exclaimed Franklin; "now which do you mean in particular?" "Why, don't you remember, Doctor, where you say, 'A light hand makes a heavy pocket.' 'He who runs in youth may lie down in old age.' 'Industry must prosper,' and all that? Now here have I been sinking deeper and deeper instead of getting on, work as I would." "Humph!" rejoined Franklin, "it strikes me, my friend, that where I say 'Industry must prosper,' there is a note at the bottom to explain." "A note? I don't recollect any note." "Then it is very likely your copy is an imperfect one; many of my first editions were; so to-morrow I'll send you a proper one I have at home, and, if you'll take the trouble to look over it you will find under the line 'Industry must prosper' a note which throws further light on the subject." The Doctor then bade him good-day and rode on. The next morning a packet was brought to the farmer's door containing the Almanac as promised, and after thumbing a few pages he found the line.

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Sure enough, beneath it was an explanatory note—being one for twenty dollars on the Philadelphia Bank.

On Sunday Franklin sometimes went with Rittenhouse to the Norriton Presbyterian Church, whose site was a little corner out of the Rittenhouse estate on the Germantown road. When Matthias Rittenhouse purchased the farm, he found the church there. He was a Mennonite, but in 1737 he deeded the property to the trustees of the church. The contract entered into was between "Matthias Rittenhausen and Elizabeth, his wife, of the township of Norrington, County of Philadelphia," and "ye said Presbyterian Profession of ye township aforesaid," conveying 72 pole of land "for a meeting house and graveyard for ye use of ye said Presbyterian Profession of ye township aforesaid, . . . for and in consideration of one silver crown." This transfer was but the fifth since the property left the possession of William Penn.

The church bears a remarkable resemblance to St. David's church at Radnor, though it has no gallery entrance. It was probably built in 1698. The cemetery indicates that it was used at least as early as 1700. The date stone was destroyed during repairs many years ago.

Over the antique windows are substantial arches of stone, and in the rear wall are two small windows, intended to afford light for the pulpit. Unfortunately a fire in 1903 destroyed most of the interior. However, a few relics may be seen. The great wooden lock in the door is one of these. One of the original collection boxes is treasured in a cabinet on the wall.

The building was used as a hospital during the Revo-

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

lution, and Washington visited it in 1778. Bloodstains may be seen on one of the window sills; no cleaner has been able to remove them. In 1785 the Assembly passed an act permitting the church to hold a lottery to repair damages.

In early days the windows in the gables caused so much trouble that they were later filled in with stone; probably gravestones were taken for the purpose. This is supposed to be the explanation of the absence of stones from almost all the old graves. There is one notable exception. A workman who was quarrying stone when the church was built was killed by a falling slab. The slab covers his grave in the cemetery.

Over one grave is written the grandiloquent message:

No display of words can add to the charm of that elegant mind and amiable disposition, which was thus early lost to the world; and the worth which adorned them will long be remembered without the aid of praise and eulogy.

On another stone is this sentiment:

Death, thou hast conquered me,  
I by thy Dart am slain;  
But Christ will conquer thee,  
And I shall rise again.

In the neighborhood are other buildings that boast of Revolutionary memories. In the house across the road from the church, one of Washington's officers came to do his courting. Just beyond is a house whose date stone may be seen by one who makes a close inspection of the bricks near the kitchen door. "W Dean, May 4, 1758," is the legend. On the top of

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the hill beyond, Fairview Hill, is Fairview Inn, which proudly proclaims the date 1732 on its signboard. Across the way is one of the numerous houses where, so it is claimed, Washington ate a meal, while down from the field, back of the house, pickets were stationed.

From Fairview Hill it is but a short distance by the Fairview road to Methacton Mennonite Meeting House. In the cemetery at this rear of the church is the last resting place of Christopher Sauer, one of the most useful men in Colonial Pennsylvania, and one of the most unfortunate.

He prospered greatly until the Revolution. Then came disaster. He was a true patriot, but he was a Mennonite, and his religion forbade him to take the oath of allegiance to the Colonies. Because of his refusal he was looked on as a Tory, and there were those who wished to make information against him that they might seize his property.

On May 24, 1778, a party of soldiers took him from bed and started with him to Valley Forge, just as he was, in his night clothes, bareheaded and barefooted. It was a cruel trip. He had been at Valley Forge several days when Washington, who was an old friend, saw him. "Why, Mr. Sauer! How do you look!" was the General's greeting. "Just as your people made me," the Mennonite preacher replied. Thereupon Washington made inquiries, dismissed the charge that he was "an oppressor of the righteous and a spy," and clothed him. He would have sent him back to Germantown, but this he was unable to do. So he gave him a pass which read:

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

Permit the bearer hereof, Mr. Sauer, to pass to Metatchy, not to return to Germantown during the stay of the army in this State.

In Methacton, Conrad Stamm gave to Sauer and his daughter a hut in which to live. He was unable to look after his property, which was seized and dissipated, but remained in Methacton until his death in 1784. He preached almost to the end of his life. Everywhere he was welcome, for he was Bishop of the Church of the Brethren.

There is a tablet to his memory in the Church of the Brethren at 6613 Main Street, Germantown, the mother church of this sect in America. But his body rests in Methacton burying ground. The grave is close to the rear wall, directly back of the meeting house. The inscription on the flat stone is:

Time hastens on the Hour  
The just shall rise and Sing.  
O Grave Where is thy Power  
O Death Where is thy Sting.

Another interesting cemetery is near the twenty-second milestone on the Germantown Road, across the way from St. James' Episcopal Church. The date in the gable of the church building is 1721. In the burying ground is a boulder marking the spot where one hundred Revolutionary soldiers are buried. Near by is a stone whose inscription reads:

A life of pain I long endured  
But when Death Came my wound was cured.  
The Doctors' skill was all in vain  
Thy Nare could ease me of my pain.

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Just before the great stone bridge on the Perkiomen is crossed the Ridge Road and the Germantown Road come together. Collegeville, which lies on the far side of the bridge, has long been an educational center. Here were Loveland Hall, a school for boys, and Glenwood Hall, said to have been the first school for girls in the country; these united to form Ursinus College, whose stately buildings may be seen on the campus on the left.

Beyond Collegeville and joining it is Trappe. The settlement was first called Landau by the man who divided it into town lots, but the place was given a new name. Dr. Muhlenberg told the story of the re-christening. John Jacob Shrack came here in 1717. With his son he built a cabin and a cave. In the cave the men cooked. They kept a small shop and a tavern. Once an English resident who had been drinking in the cave fell asleep, and came home late. His wife scolded him. He excused himself by saying he had been in the trap. From this time the neighborhood was called Trapp. At a public meeting held in February, 1835, it was decided that the name should be Trappe.

In Trappe is St. Luke's Reformed Church, founded in 1755 and built in 1835, but this is overshadowed by the old Lutheran church, across the street, at the rear of the lot, built in 1743.

On December 12, 1742, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg held his first service in Trappe in a barn. Soon afterward it was decided to build a church of stone, "54 schuh long bei 37 schuh breit." (The German *schuh*, for foot, is still used in some parts of Pennsylvania.)

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The new building was to cost £200. The plans were sent to Germany for approval, and £115 was given there for the project. During one whole winter all the people worked preparing material. Men hauled stone, and children helped by splitting and shaving the oak shingles.

At the consecration of the church, on October 6, 1748, Mr. Pawling, Church Warden of St. James at Evansburg, presented three negroes for baptism, saying that] "Dutch baptism is good enough for blacks."

The church is the oldest unaltered Lutheran church in America. In 1860, however, it was in grave danger. A storm had torn off the roof. The people, who were in debt for the new building, thought this an "excuse for resigning it to the desolation which the hand of Providence has already begun." Fortunately there were those who thought of making an appeal to the descendants of Dr. Muhlenberg in New York. This was done successfully, and the building was preserved.

The interior furnishings are identically the same as when the church was first opened. Worms have destroyed part of a few of the planks, but their ravages have been arrested. Among the features of the building that attract notice are the pulpit, with its sounding board and folding seat for the minister; the gallery, supported by squared oak pillars, painted and grained to represent marble; the seats in the gallery, put together with oak pins, which rise like bleachers in the baseball field; the pews with doors on the floor; the

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"seats of the mighty" facing the pulpit, with their ornate door hinges; the numbers, indicating sittings, burnt into the backs of the pews; the ponderous lock and key; the case of the first pipe organ in the colony, whose pipes have all been taken as souvenirs.

Dr. Muhlenberg married in 1745 and built a house further down the road on which the church faces. This house was burned years ago, but the walls are part of the present house. The pastor built a second house some years later; this stands on the main road, on the right, toward Collegeville, a short distance from the church.

Dr. Muhlenberg was a faithful pastor. Up and down the main road and the many cross roads he traveled among his people. "Frequently the roads, the river, the storm, the cold, the snow, the weather are such that one would not like to drive the dog out of the house," he wrote at one time, "yet the pastor must go his rounds. God in His mercy often saved me in most imminent danger, and preserved my poor bones when horse and rider fell."

The salary promised to him was equal to \$106.66. But this was not paid in full. "My clothes during the first and second years were so totally worn out by my constant travelling," the doctor wrote, "that I had to contract a debt of sixteen pounds to buy under-clothing and other garments." Yet he did not complain. He said of the people, "They do not know how to make their good-will toward me sufficiently manifest."

Dr. Muhlenberg is buried back of the church, within

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

a few feet of the pulpit. By his side rests his son, General John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg, who was ordained in 1769. Later he was pastor at Woodstock, Virginia. There, during the stirring days before the beginning of the Revolution, he concluded a sermon to his people by saying, "There is a time to preach, and a time to pray; there is also a time to fight, and that time has now come." As he spoke he threw aside his gown, and stood before his awed congregation garbed in his colonial uniform.

Near him in the burying ground lies the body of "Margaret, wife of George Moses, born July 5, 1750, died November 21, 1854, aged 104 years." She is a fit neighbor to General Muhlenberg, for when her husband was called to the war, while he was shingling his new barn, she climbed to the roof and completed the work. She was a relative of William Hurry, keeper of the State House in Philadelphia, and doorkeeper while Congress was in session, who rang the bell when the Declaration of Independence was signed.

Six days after the battle of Brandywine Washington's army marched from the ferry over the Schuylkill four miles to Trappe, coming out on the main road above the church. On September 17 Dr. Muhlenberg with his telescope could see the British camp across the river. All night the American army moved past the old church to the Perkiomen, one regiment at midnight encamping on the bare ground in front of Dr. Muhlenberg's house.

During the next four weeks the church was used as barracks, and then as a hospital. On October 5 Wash-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

ington entered the church and cheered the wounded and dying.

For some reason the British feared Dr. Muhlenberg. On December 11, 1777, he wrote in his diary: "I am informed that the British threaten to capture me and wreak vengeance." Later he was told that the British threatened him with torture, prison and death, "if we can catch the old fellow."

Soldiers were not the only travelers on the turnpike during the troubled days of the Revolution. Once, when Howe threatened Philadelphia, people fled in numbers out this road. One day Dr. Muhlenberg wrote in his diary, "To-day many teams loaded with furniture and people flying from Philadelphia have passed the town." Six days later he said, "During the whole day wagons have been passing with goods, and men, women and children flying from Philadelphia." After the battle of Brandywine he wrote, "A disturbed Sunday. Coaches, chaises and wagons loaded with fugitives, passing without intermission."

Once, after Isaac R. Pennypacker had visited the old Trappe church, and had saturated himself with the memories and the traditions of the spot, he wrote his poem, "The Trapp," which Longfellow includes in his "Poems of Places":

And it seemed that a breath of a spirit,  
Like a zephyr at cool of the day,  
Passed o'er us and then we could hear it  
In the loft through the organ pipes' play.  
All the aisle and the chancel seemed haunted,  
And weird anthems by voices were chanted,  
Where dismantled the organ pipes lay.

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

Came the warrior who robed as a colonel  
Led his men to fight from the prayer,  
And the pastor who tells in his journal  
What he saw in the sunlight's bright glare.  
How a band of wild troopers danced under  
While the organ was pealing its thunder  
In gay tunes on the sanctified air.

Then came the days of peace, when soldiers disappeared from the turnpike and travelers took their place. Jacob Heebner was one of the early drivers of stages who became noted as an expert in drawing the reins over his coach and four. When on duty he always wore a corduroy suit and a short coat called a roundabout. His route extended from Pottstown to the Trappe, and on to Norristown.

Other users of the road were teamsters who transported pig iron from Reading and Pottsville to Philadelphia.

The first forge and furnace was built at Pottsville, nine miles from Trappe, in 1800. In 1804 John Pott bought the ground on which the town was laid out in 1816. At the time the main road was in a fearful condition whenever the weather was bad. As late as 1830 several women in Pottsville sent a letter to a local paper asking for a plank sidewalk, since they had not been able to go to church for several months because the mud was so deep.

It is evident that Pottsville was noted more in early days for railroad construction than for road improvement. In 1826 and 1827 John Pott built a railroad half a mile long from the Schuylkill to a point in Black Valley. His purpose was to transport coal from the

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

mine to the river. Before this, transportation had been by wagon. The road was equipped with wooden rails laid on wooden sills. Horses drew the cars. This road was begun the same year as the pioneer road from Granite Quarries to Quincy, Massachusetts, usually known as the pioneer road of America.

In 1828 or 1829 the Board of Directors of the Schuylkill Canal came up to look at the road. They were surprised to see a train of thirteen cars, each loaded with one and a half tons of coal, drawn to the canal by horses. Mr. Pott assured them that in less than ten years they would find that a railroad along the bank of the Schuylkill from Philadelphia to the coal region would be competing with the canal in the transportation of coal. They told him he was crazy. The prophecy was not quite accurate, for while the new road was begun in 1835, its completion was delayed until 1842 by the building of a tunnel at Port Chester.

Eighteen miles from Pottsville is Reading. The town was laid out in 1748. William Penn's sons, Thomas and Richard, who were responsible for the town, named it for Reading, England. In 1750 there was but one house in the place, but in 1757 there were 130 dwellings, 106 families and 378 people.

The early residents communicated frequently with Philadelphia, though there was no regular stage line until 1789. Martin Hanna was the driver of this pioneer line. He made weekly trips and charged two dollars for the trip. Letters were carried for threepence. The round trip was made in two days. William Coleman became the owner of the line in 1791, and for

## THE OLD GERMANTOWN ROAD

seventy years the Coleman family was identified with staging in and about Reading.

The road to Perkiomen was begun in 1810 and was completed in 1814. Thus the travelers to Philadelphia and the farmers who sought Reading with their produce were given better facilities.

Mayor William Stahle, who wrote a description of the Borough of Reading, in 1841, waxed eloquent as he told of these farmers:

"Up in the morning early!" is the song of the blith country women to the sleepy citizens of Reading, as they make their midnight entry into town, well prepared and eager for the Strife of trade.

The author said that those who got up in the morning early to buy from the early travelers along the roads leading into Reading needed to keep their eyes open, for it was found necessary to have a clerk of the market, who, by a special ordinance of the Borough, "is directed to keep a sharp eye on all balls of butter purporting to be a pound weight."

Mayor Stahle concluded his book by saying, "Finally, reader, my task is done, and thine also; if not, a second perusal is modestly recommended: and now, from famine, floods, and folly, may Providence and prudence preserve thee."

## IX

### THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

**T**HE trip out the Bethlehem road might be called A Revolutionary Pilgrimage. The traveler finds himself on historic ground at once, and the memories of Washington and his brave men persist as he goes on his way.

The start is made from the Pennsylvania station in Chestnut Hill. Here the Bethlehem Road joins the Germantown Road. The first part of the road offers opportunity for a leisurely day's tramp, or the cars of the Lehigh Valley Transit Company may be taken, for these keep close to the road as far as Ambler; or the entire route from Chestnut Hill to Bethlehem, forty-three miles, may be covered delightfully by automobile.

At the foot of the long hill near the beginning of the road is the Wheel Pump Inn, where British officers frequently gathered in the days when the armies of Great Britain and America faced each other at Whitemarsh. The inn gets its name from the curious wheel by which water is raised for thirsty horses.

At the corner of Church Lane, near the milestone marked twelve and one-half, is the entrance to the road leading to old St. Thomas' Church. The hill on which the church stands was one of the hills in the Whitemarsh (Widemarsh) Valley, where Washington in 1777 proved himself a master of military tactics, and held at bay Howe with his threatening force.

## THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

This became famous as Church Hill; to the left is Barren Hill, and to the right is Camp Hill. Militia Hill and Fort Hill were other points of importance.

Church Hill was part of a hill known to the Indians as Umbilicamence, as appears from a letter written by William Penn to his Surveyor General, Thomas Holme, in 1683. This letter told of the settling in this neighborhood of the widow and children of Jaspar Farmar, an Irishman who died while he was corresponding with Penn about coming to America. They came to Philadelphia in the ship *Bristol Merchant* in 1685, accompanied by forty servants and dependents.

Edward Farmar, one of the sons, used to gather about him on Sundays all who would attend, and read to them the services of the Church of England. A few years later, certainly before 1700, a small log cabin was built for the use of these gatherings of neighbors; this was located near the center of the present churchyard. Here Mr. Farmar continued to hold services until a stone building was erected in 1710. For one hundred and seven years the building was the home of the congregation, and scores of members were buried in the churchyard surrounding the edifice.

In 1718 a rector from England took charge of the church, and also of Oxford Church, near Cheltenham. To facilitate the passage of the devoted rector from one parish to the other, the members in 1734 built a road ten miles long, known even now as the Church Road. This road used to pass over the site of the present rectory.

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One of the famous pastors of this church was Rev. Slator Clay, who had a remarkable career. During the Revolution he went to the West Indies with a friend who was a sea captain. When the vessel was captured by a British privateer, Mr. Clay was put ashore on the island of Antigua with only one piece of money in his possession. After a time he took passage in a vessel bound for New York, which was then occupied by the British. The sailors mutinied, and the vessel was later cast on Bermuda Rocks. After teaching school at Bermuda for six years, he returned to Philadelphia in 1786. A few months later he married the widow of Isaac Hughes of Poplar Lane on the Gulph Road. Within a year he was ordained deacon in Christ Church, Philadelphia. In 1790 he began his pastorate at St. Thomas'.

During the Revolutionary War the church services were suspended, and Church Hill was on three occasions occupied by military forces, first by the Americans after the Battle of Germantown, second by a body of the Hessian cavalry, and third by British officers under Lord Howe. The church itself was greatly defaced and damaged, and finally almost destroyed by fire. On one occasion it was used as a fort, when guns were planted in the windows and fired upon the retreating Americans. The gravestones, many of which were long, flat pieces of slate or marble resting upon four small posts, or pillars, received rough treatment. Fires were lighted under them, and they were used as cooking ranges. Some of the upright stones became marks for target practice. Two or three of the most ancient

## THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

tombstones in the churchyard to-day have evidently been chipped by bullets.

On the day after the Battle of Germantown, fought on the third and fourth of October, 1777, the defeated American army retired to Church Hill. Of this movement General Anthony Wayne wrote:

The troops who took the upper road formed at Whitemarsh Church under General Stephen. It was thought advisable to remain here some time to collect stragglers from the army. But the enemy made their appearance with a party of light horse and from 1,500 to 2,000 infantry, with two field pieces. The troops were ordered off, while I covered the rear with some infantry and Colonel Butler's dragoons, but, finding the enemy determined to push us hard, I obtained from General Stephen some field pieces and took advantage of a hill which overlooked the road upon which the enemy were marching. They met with such a reception that they were induced to retire over the bridge, which they had just passed, and gave up further pursuit.

After the Revolution seven years passed before services were resumed. In 1786 it was decided to repair the building. From that time there has been no interruption in the life of the church. The old building was enlarged in 1817, and in 1868 it was decided to build the present edifice.

Among the stones in the churchyard is the marble slab above the body of Edward Farmar. This originally stood in the north aisle of the church. Later buildings were erected a little to one side. Since that time the Farmar tomb has been in the open.

A curious epitaph records:

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here Lyeth the  
body of iames  
allison, who departed  
this life October  
the 2 1729  
aged 45 years

On the face of the stone is a strange design—a rude head, surmounting a pair of wings, beneath which are the conventional crossbones.

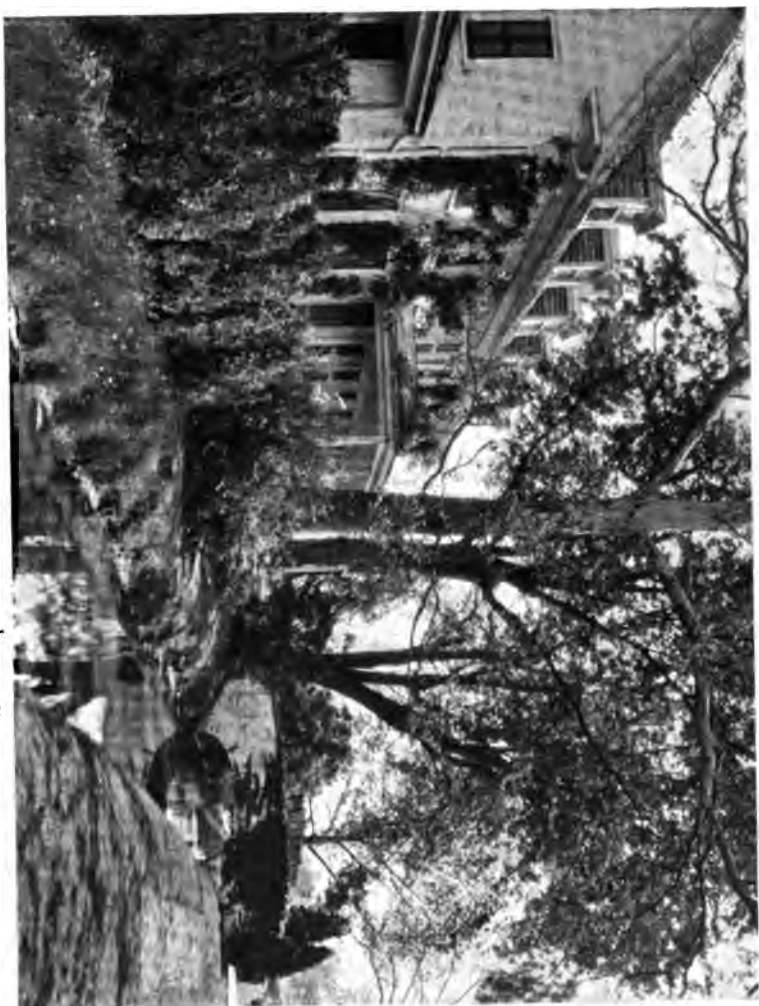
Another stone says:

Life is a cheat  
And always show it,  
I thought so once,  
And now I know it.

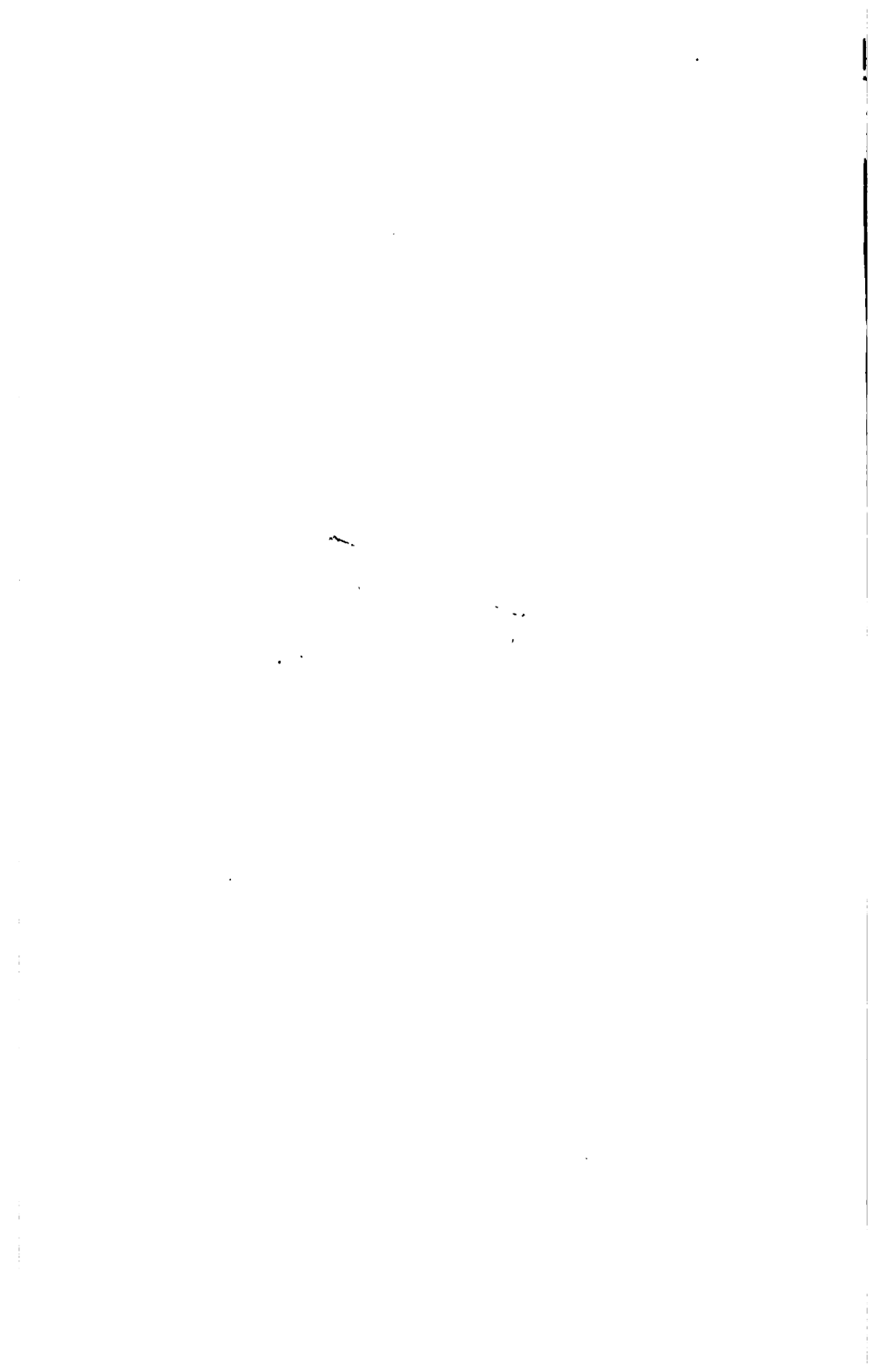
On the summit of Camp Hill is the Van Rensselaer Mansion. On this estate is the old burial plot of Nicholas Scull, who came to America with the Farmers in 1685. His son became Surveyor General of the Province and laid out many of the old roads. Some of the most famous of the early maps are known by his name.

Not far from the gates of Camp Hill is the entrance, through a white gate on the left, to the ground of Emlen House, owned by Emlen Devereux, where Washington had his headquarters during the Whitemarsh campaign. Additions and improvements have been made to the house, but the outline of the original mansion can still be traced. The old moat beyond the house gives variety to the picture.

From November 2 to December 11, 1777, when the army left for Gulph Mills and Valley Forge, Washington here kept open house to his generals. Sally Wister,



EMILEN HOUSE, NEAR ST. THOMAS' CHURCH  
Washington's headquarters from October 30 to December 11, 1777



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in her Journal, has told many incidents of this sojourn. One of the most important events of those days was the Council of War held on the evening of November 24, 1777, when Washington and his associates considered the question of making an immediate attack on the enemy in Philadelphia. The attack was not made, for eleven officers were opposed to the movement, while but four favored it.

General Washington's Orderly Book throws interesting light on the events of these days at Emlen. For instance, there is the record of November 7, 1777:

Since the General left Germantown, in the middle of September last, he has been without his baggage, and on that account is unable to receive company in the manner he could wish. He nevertheless desires the Generals, Field Officers and Brigade-Major of the day to dine with him in the future at three o'clock in the afternoon.

Two weeks later this fact was recorded:

The Commander in Chief offers a reward of ten dollars to any person, who shall by nine o'clock on Monday morning produce the best substitute for shoes, made of raw hides. The Commissary of hides and the Major-General of the day, are to judge of the essays and assign the reward to the best artist.

Fortunately there have come down to us glimpses of the lives of the private soldiers during these days of waiting. Elijah Faber, a Yankee private, kept a journal while he was at Whitemarsh. In this he said:

We had no pots nor anything to Cook our Provisions in, and that was Porty Poor, for beef was very leen and no salt, nor any way to cook it but to throw it

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on the cole and brile it; and the water we had to drink and mix our flower with was out of a brook that run along by the Camp, and so many a dippien and washin (in) it which maid it very Dirty and Muddy.

Then there is the story of a private not over sixteen years old, who was homesick. His companions teased him. One day he lost patience and threatened to thrash his persecutor. He was winner after a long and severe contest. The soldiers talked about it, and the captain finally heard of it. The officer promptly assembled the company and ordered the guilty men to step forward. Then he looked at them sharply. They hung their heads for shame. The officer made known his sentence: "You are ordered for punishment to drink together a mug of cider!"

The waiting army at Whitemarsh was saved from what might have been dire disaster by the presence of mind and bravery of Lydia Darragh, who lived at this period in a house at Second and Little Dock streets, below Spruce street, in Philadelphia. On the evening of December 2, 1777, British officers used this house for a consultation. Lydia, from a closet where she was hidden, overheard the plan to surprise Washington within two or three days. On the evening of December 4 she carried an empty bag out Front street to the Germantown Road, presented a pass to the British picket, then hurried out the Frankford Road to Frankford Creek. There, at the mill, she left the sack which had been her excuse for coming from Philadelphia.

From the mill she went by the Nicetown Lane, to seek the American outpost at Rising Sun Tavern, cor-

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ner of Twelfth street and Germantown Road. She was nearly there when she met Colonel Thomas Craig, whom she knew. To him she gave the information she had overheard. The Colonel took her to a house near by and hurried in search of General Boudinot. In the mean time Lydia, it is conjectured, wrote out her story, placed it in an old needle book, and sent it to General Boudinot by the old woman to whom she had been taken. General Boudinot told of receiving the message:

In the autumn of 1777 the American army lay some time at Whitemarsh. I was the commissary general of provisions, and managed the intelligence of the army. I was reconnoitering along the lines near the city of Philadelphia. I dined at a small post out the Rising Sun, about three miles from the city. After dinner a little, poor-looking, insignificant old woman came up and solicited leave to go into the country to buy some flour. While we were asking some questions she walked up to me and put into my hand a dirty old needlebook with various small pockets in it. Surprised at this, I told her to retire, she should have an answer. On opening the needlebook I could not find anything till I got to the last pocket, when I found a piece of paper, rolled up into the form of a pipe shank. On unrolling it I found information that General Howe was coming out the next morning, with 5000 men, 10 pieces of cannon, baggage wagons, and 11 boats on wheels. On comparing this with other information, I found it true and immediately rode post to headquarters.

It was his judgment that the British intended to cross the Delaware and return immediately, to surprise Washington in the rear. But the general insisted that the boats would be intended merely as a blind; that

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the real purpose of the British would be to approach by a certain road. General Boudinot thought that the general was in error, but the result showed that his judgment was correct. "I then said that I would never set up my judgment against his," the narrator told of his wise determination.

The British advanced as Lydia had said they would, but the preparations made by Washington were effective. For several days they encamped on Chestnut Hill; then they returned to the city.

Having delivered her message, Lydia Darragh returned to the mill, filled her sack, and walked back to Philadelphia.

Doubt has been thrown on this story by careful historians, but a publication of the City History Society of Philadelphia, dated 1916, presents thorough and circumstantial proof of its truth.

In the immediate neighborhood, beyond St. Thomas' Church, is wonderful old Hope Lodge, built in 1721 by Samuel Morris, son of Morris Morris, who was for many years justice of the peace in Whitemarsh and an overseer of Plymouth Meeting. The name Hope Lodge was given to the property to mark the reconciliation between Henry Hope and James Horatio Watmough. Soon after the house was left to Watmough, with a remainder to Henry Hope, in 1784, the men quarreled, and when they were once more on good terms the property was deeded by Watmough to Hope. To-day the house is occupied by George J. Wentz, in whose family it has been for eighty-seven years.

While the house is dignified in appearance, there is



THE WENTZ FARM HOUSE, 1804, NEAR ST. THOMAS' CHURCH



HOPE LODGE, WHITEMARSH, 1721



THE HIGHLANDS, SKIPPACK PIKE, NEAR BETHLEHEM PIKE

## THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

nothing especially impressive about the exterior. But the interior is a marvel. The wonderful wainscotings and panelings were imported from England. The old mantels, the Dutch tiles, the floors, the massive doors and locks, the H and L hinges hold the eye. The staircase is a thing of beauty, and the method of lighting it is most unusual.

There is a tradition that the attic room was intended to be the home of the first Masonic Lodge in Pennsylvania, and that the preliminary meetings of Fort Washington Lodge were held here. The wide stairway to this attic chamber is a notable feature of the house.

When Samuel Morris built the house he planned it for his bride, but he lived and died a bachelor. There is a story that a brutal remark made in the presence of the girl he hoped to marry, on the evening of the housewarming, was responsible for her refusal to become his bride.

During the Revolution Washington sometimes entered the mansion, though not on invitation, for the owner was a Royalist.

A tablet by the roadside a short distance beyond Hope Lodge tells of other movements of Washington and his army during the weeks he spent in the locality. Near by is what remains of Fort Washington.

The famous Skippack Road joins the turnpike near the foot of Church Hill. This road, one of the oldest in the vicinity of Philadelphia, having been laid out by Hendrick Pannebecker in 1713, was frequently named in Washington's orderly book, for many movements of his army were made along its course. When

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the soldiers marched this way from Whitemarsh toward Valley Forge, British cannon on Church Hill were fired after them.

Within a mile of the beginning of the Skipack Road is the entrance to stately Highlands, a mansion of the Later Georgian period, as Hope Lodge is a representative of the Early Georgian.

Anthony Morris, the builder of Highlands, was born in 1766. In 1793, as speaker of the state senate, he signed the bill calling for troops to suppress the whiskey rebellion. For this reason the Meeting of which he was a member dismissed him. In 1796 he built the mansion, but retained it for only twelve years. In 1808 he sold the estate to a man named Hitner. In 1813 George Sheaff secured it, and for more than one hundred years it has been in the same family. John D. T. Sheaff, who died in the house in 1915, at the age of 96 (in the same room in which he was born), was a son of George Sheaff.

There are but two disappointing features in the interior of the house. The original mantels were replaced perhaps fifty years ago by modern marble atrocities. Then the stair railing was never completed. For more than a generation a scaffolding stood in the stair well, except when there was a funeral; then it was removed, to be replaced immediately. On the landing, for fifty years has stood a crated newel post of impossible design. Fortunately this was never put in place.

The family portrait gallery in the spacious hall contains some good pictures by Thomas Sully. At the far end is Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, the first



**DOORWAY, THE HIGHLANDS**



**DAWESFIELD, NEAR BLUE BELL, ON THE SKIPPACK PIKE**  
**Washington's headquarters from October 21 to November 2, 1777. Now the home of**  
**Mr. George J. Cooke**



**THE PETER WENTZ HOUSE, 1758, NEAR CENTER POINT**



**THE FOULKE HOUSE, PENLLYN**

**The center portion, which was built in 1740, was occupied by Sallie Wister when she wrote her famous diary. Now the house of Mr. Edward J. Pershing**

## THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

Speaker of Congress. Then come his children, Henry W. and Anne Catherine. Henry married Mary Sheaff, while Anne married Mary's brother George, who bought the mansion in 1813. The portraits of all of these are on the walls.

Farther along the Skippack Road is Blue Bell, where John Philip Boehm, a German schoolmaster, began preaching to a congregation of his countrymen. The first church was built a short distance from the village, to the right of the road. The present building was erected in 1818, though many alterations have been made in it. The original church was used as a hospital for General Weedon's brigade after the Battle of Germantown. From October 21 to November 2 the army was encamped in the vicinity of Blue Bell.

Washington had his headquarters at Dawesfield, the home of James Morris, a short distance from the main road, east of Blue Bell. This house is now the home of George J. Cook, a Philadelphia banker. The oldest part was built in 1736, though additions were made in 1785 and 1821. The chief attraction is the room just above the main entrance, which was occupied by Washington. Attached to the bedstead is a plate bearing this inscription:

General Washington slept in this  
Bedstead during the Encampment at  
Whitpain. "Headquarters at James  
Morris's." October 21st to  
November 2d, 1777.

Dawesfield is famous as the scene of the court martial of General Anthony Wayne, held at his request

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

because of charges made against him as a result of the Paoli Massacre. General Wayne was acquitted with honor.

Another Washington headquarters is not far from Center Point, and half a mile from the Skippack, on the road to Lansdale. This is a fine old brown stone farmhouse built in 1758, by Peter Wentz. Here Washington stopped after the Battle of Germantown, occupying two rooms in the west corner of the house. In the first story room he took his meals, and he slept and wrote in a large square room above. Here, on October 16, 1777, he penned a message to Congress, referring to the Battle of Saratoga:

It is with the highest satisfaction that I congratulate Congress on the success of our armies at the Northward, an event of the most interesting importance at this juncture. From the happy train in which things were then, I hope we shall soon hear of the more decisive advantage. We moved this morning from the encampment at which we had been for six or seven days past, and are just arrived at the grounds we occupied before the action of the 4th.

During Washington's stay at the Wentz house some of his soldiers camped in the woodland northeast of the house. In the rear of the barn two soldiers are buried.

The date stone, bearing the initials of Peter Wentz and his wife Rosanna, is easily seen. Below the initials are the lines:

Jesu komm in Mein Haus  
Weig nimmer mer haraus;  
Komm mit deine Gnadenguet  
Und stelle meine selzu fried.

## THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

Or, freely translated:

Jesus, come into my house,  
Never to leave again;  
Come with thy blessed favor,  
And bring peace to my soul.

Tradition says that before coming to Pennsylvania, Peter Wentz was a wild sea rover, and that he commanded a privateer. After buying the 940 acre farm on which he erected the house he reformed and became an earnest Dunker.

For more than one hundred and twenty years the house has been in the possession of the Schultz family.

Six miles beyond Center Point is perhaps the most historic spot on the Skippack, Pennypacker's Mills at Schwenksville, the home of the late Samuel W. Pennypacker. Mr. Pennypacker lived in a house built in 1720 by Hans Yost Heijt, which has been in the possession of the Pennypacker family since 1759. The map of the Revolutionary period marks Pennypacker's Mills as an important point. These mills, on the banks of the Perkiomen, were for many years a landmark throughout the neighborhood.

On September 26, 1777, after the Battle of Brandywine, Washington went to the head of the Skippack Road, with his army of ten thousand men. He made his headquarters at the old house. It is said that of the twenty or twenty-five headquarters of General Washington still in existence over the country, this is the only one remaining in the name of the family having it at the time of the Revolution.

On September 28, 1777, a council of generals was

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

held at the house, in consequence of which the army marched down the Skippack Road to Germantown.

The Skippack Road has so many points of surpassing interest and the landscape is so beautiful that it is well to return to Fort Washington by the route already covered. From Fort Washington the turnpike should be followed once more toward Bethlehem.

Three-quarters of a mile from Spring House, near Penllyn railway station, is the Foulke House, now the home of Edward J. Pershing. This is the place on the banks of the Wissahickon made famous by Sally Wister when she was living with her family in a part of the home of Hannah Foulke, widow, during the occupation of Philadelphia by the British. Here the vivacious Sally wrote the Journal in which she gave so many racy incidents of life on the border between the armies of the Americans and the British.

Perhaps the most interesting of the narratives in the Journal is the story of the British Grenadier, a wooden figure, life size, which once served as an advertisement at the door of the Southwark Theater on Cedar and Apollo Streets, Philadelphia. It seems likely that this figure was painted by Major André, who was one of the scene painters for the theater.

Somehow the gorgeous Grenadier was in the possession of the Wister family at the time when Sally Wister was writing her Journal. George Washington's troops were in camp not far from Sally's refuge, and she had many acquaintances among the officers. One of these was a diffident man, Major Tilly, whom Sally described thus:

## THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

He seems a wild, noisy Mortal, tho' I am not much Acquainted with him. He appears bashful when with girls. . . . He is above the common size, rather genteel, an extreme pretty, ruddy face, hair brown and a sufficiency of it, a very great laugh, and talks so excessively fast that he often begins sentences without finishing the last, which confuses him very much, and then blushes and laughs; and in short, he keeps me in perpetual good humour; but the Creature has not addressed one civil thing to me since he came.

Sally took her revenge on the uncivil major by playing harmless jokes on him. The wooden figure of the British Grenadier was the inspiration of one of these jokes, and of this she told in paragraphs so delicious that they must not be spoiled by an attempt at paraphrase:

We had brought some weeks ago a British grenadier from Uncle Miles's on purpose to divert us. It is remarkably well executed, six feet high, and makes a martial appearance. This we agreed to stand at the door that opens into the road (the house has four rooms on a floor, with a wide entry running through), with another figure that would add to the deceit. One of our servants was to stand behind them, others were to serve as occasion offered. . . .

Never did I more sincerely wish to possess a descriptive genius than I do now. All that I can write will fall infinitely short of the truly diverting scene that I have been witness to to-night. But, as I mean to attempt an account, I had as well shorten the preface, and begin the story.

In the beginning of the even'g I went to Liddy (Foulke) and beg'd her to secure the swords and pistols which were in their parlor. The Marylander (Major

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Stodard) hearing our voices, joined us. I told him of my proposal. Whether he thought it a good one or not I can't say, but he approv'd of it, and Liddy went in and brought her apron full of swords & pistols.

When this was done, Stodard join'd the officers. We girls went and stood at the first landing of the stairs. The gentlemen were very merry and chatting on public affairs, when Seaton's negro (observe that Seaton, being indisposed, was appriz'd of the scheme) open'd the door, candle in his hand, and said, "There's somebody at the door that wishes to see you."

"Who? All of us?" said Tilly.

"Yes, sir," answered the boy.

They all rose (the Major, as he afterwards said, almost dying with laughing) and walked into the entry, Tilly first, in full expectation of news.

The first object that struck his view, was the British soldier. In a moment his ears were saluted with "Is there any rebel officers here?" in a thundering voice.

Not waiting for a second word, he darted like lightning out at the front door, through the yard, bolted o'er the fence. Swamps, fences, thorn-hedges, and plough'd fields no way impeded his retreat. He was soon out of hearing.

The woods echoed with "Which way did he go? Stop him! Surround the house!" The Amiable Lipscombe had his hand on the latch of the door, intending to effect his escape; Stodard, considering his indisposition, acquainted him with the deceit.

We females ran down stairs to join in the general laugh. I walked into Jessie's parlor. There sat poor Stodard (whose sore lips must have received no advantage from this), almost convuls'd with laughing, rolling in an arm chair. He said nothing. I believe he could not have spoke.

## THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

"Major Stodard," said I, "go call Tilly back. He will lose himself,—indeed he will;" every word interrupted with a "Ha! Ha!"

At last he rose, and went to the door, and what a loud voice could avail in bringing him back, he tried.

Figure to thyself this Tilly, of a snowy even'g, no hat, shoes down at heel, hair unty'd, flying across meadows, creeks and mud-holes. Flying from what? Why, a bit of painted wood. But he was ignorant of what it was. The idea of being made a prisoner wholly engross'd his mind, and his last resource was to run.

After a while, we being in rather more composure and our bursts of laughter less frequent, yet by no means subsided,—in full assembly of girls and officers,—Tilly entr'd.

The greatest part of my risibility turned to pity. Inexpressible confusion had taken entire possession of his countenance, his fine hair hanging dishevell'd down his shoulders, all splashed with mud; yet his fright, confusion and race had not divested him of his beauty.

At last his good nature gain'd a compleat ascendancy over his anger, and he joined heartily in the laugh. I will do him the justice to say that he bore it charmingly. No cowardly threats, no vengeance denounced.

Stodard caught hold of his Coat. "Come, look at what you ran from," and drag'd him to the door.

He gave it a look, said it was very natural, and by the regularity of his expression, gave fresh cause for diversion. We all retir'd to our different parlours, for to rest our faces, if I may say so.

The figure of the British Grenadier that caused so much diversion may still be seen at Grumblethorpe,

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

in Germantown. Not long ago it was taken to Foulke House, on the occasion of a pilgrimage of a historical society, and was set up in the front hall, in the position Sally Wister placed it.

Montgomery Square is the next point of special interest on the road to Bethlehem. Here are two old inns, separated by the State Road. The first of these is Old Lower Inn, now a private dwelling house. The residents in the vicinity tell with bated breath of a gang of counterfeiters who made their headquarters here and flooded the surrounding country with spurious coin. Some seventy-five years ago the secret service agents spent weary months in trailing these lawbreakers. The search was finally successful. The counterfeiters, finding themselves closely pursued, tried to destroy the evidence that would be used against them by throwing their dies and their spurious coins into an old quarry down the road. For years it was a popular amusement among the boys to explore the quarry in the vain hope of recovering some of the loot.

The abandoned inn, across the State Road, is notable because of the fine moulding to be seen under the eaves on the front of the building, and because of the study in shingles and gables afforded by an inspection of the rear.

Beyond Montgomery Square, at Montgomeryville, is the Walker Inn, a house more than a century old. If he has a chance the proprietor is glad to show to travelers many curiosities he has gathered under his roof, including an Indian harrow ingeniously made of wood. This is used as a hatrack.



UPPER INN, MONTGOMERY SQUARE



UPPER INN, REAR VIEW



**OLD FARM HOUSE, BETWEEN MONTGOMERYVILLE AND DOYLESTOWN**



**AN OLD HOUSE IN BETHLEHEM**

## THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

The turnpike increases in interest as the distance of twenty-nine miles from Montgomeryville to Bethlehem is traversed. Many landmarks are seen which were viewed by the passengers between Philadelphia and Bethlehem, in the years following 1750. In those days the road was difficult at most seasons, but the difficulties of the road were nothing to the difficulties of the ferry at Bethlehem in time of high water, until a rope ferry was substituted for the primitive pole ferry which four men found it difficult to move across the river in less than half an hour.

It was a great day when, by means of the rope ferry, the time for crossing was reduced to ninety seconds. Soon after this came another improvement—the first regular stage between the cities, which made the round trip once each week.

The merchants at Bethlehem knew how to draw trade, for in January, 1767, the traveler was attracted by a sign at the ferry:

All such persons as bring wheat, rye, Indian corn & buckwheat, to the grist mill at Bethlehem, for grinding, are free from ferriage, provided they observe the following regulations.

Then came a table fixing the minimum quantity of each grain to be hauled by one or by two horses, in a cart, or in a sled. Provisions brought for sale might be on the same vehicle. All persons on their way to church were carried free, provided they did not come for the purpose of transacting business or carrying parcels.

During the year 1777 the ferry saw busy times, for

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Bethlehem was crowded with delegates to Congress, officers and civilians, the heavy baggage and wounded of the army, and soldiers and prisoners of war. On July 25, 1782, General Washington crossed the ferry to the town.

Twice between 1775 and 1781 many of the houses in Bethlehem were occupied by American troops and British prisoners of war. The Single Brethren House was used as a hospital. For this no charge was made, though the building was occupied for eight months and ten days, but in 1779 a bill was sent for repairs amounting to \$358.

On September 13, 1777, there was excitement in Bethlehem because of the word that Washington's army had been compelled to fall back on Philadelphia. Three days later came a letter from David Rittenhouse announcing that all the military stores of the army, in upwards of seven hundred wagons, had been ordered to Bethlehem. The church bells of Philadelphia as well as Independence Bell were taken to Bethlehem, on the way to Allentown. The wagon on which the Independence Bell was loaded broke down on descending the hill in front of the hospital, and had to be unloaded while repairs were being made.

The most distinguished patient cared for in Bethlehem was the Marquis de Lafayette, who was brought from Brandywine, and was nursed by the Moravian sister Liesel Beckel.

In April, 1780, all Bethlehem was dismayed because Congress talked of locating the Capital there. Lewis Weiss of Philadelphia wrote to Rev. John Ettwein of

## THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

Bethlehem, informing him of the threatened danger to the morals of the staid town.

I was yesterday spoken to by a friend of mine, a member of Congress, intimating that Congress had a mind to change their residence, and that it was proposed by some members Bethlehem would be a very proper place for making a Hague, like in Holland. I immediately exclaimed that Congress was mad! . . . I should be very sorry if Congress should come to reside even in your neighborhood, for it would spoil the morals of many of your people, and the markets of all of them.

To this letter Mr. Ettwein replied:

Bethlehem has about thirty-six private dwelling-houses, which are inhabited by sixty-one families, with their different trades and workshops, so that many a family has but one single room for themselves and their all. You know the public buildings, as the meeting-house, schools, the house of the single brethern, single sisters, and widows, taverns, and mills, are full of people; and I may, with truth, observe that no village or town in the State is so crowded with inhabitants as Bethlehem now is. Nazareth is not much better, and as it lies nine miles nigher to the Blue Mountains, that settlement is the first refuge of the settlers behind the mountains, as soon as they fear the least danger on account of the Indians. . . . Yet, if ever the honourable Congress and its appendages could find the necessary accommodations here and in the neighborhood, which I know to be impossible, if they will not live in tents, it would, in my humble opinion, be a dangerous residence for them, as we are so nigh the mountains and the Big Swamp, from which an army could with ease walk in one night to Bethlehem. And such a treasure as the

## **OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA**

**Congress might be a great temptation for the Indians or their desperate associates to make a sudden attempt on the place, if they were not cowed by a considerable force.**

**The letter closed with an appeal that Congress might not "distress the inhabitants of this little place, disturb its happy constitution, and have nothing for it but trouble, exposure, and disappointment."**

**Wiser counsels prevailed, and the Capital remained near the coast.**

## X

### THE OLD YORK ROAD

**I**N 1680 two young men, Heinrich Frey and Joseph Plattenbach, had a blacksmith shop near the present corner of Front and Arch Streets. One of the curious visitors to their shop was a young Indian to whom they showed great kindness. One day the Indian, who was Joseph the son of Tamane, the chief of the Leni Lenape, followed an old Indian trail through the woods to the headquarters of the tribe. The visitors made such a good impression on the Leni Lenape that they were adopted into the tribe. Before their return Tamane took them to the spot where the Germantown Road joins the York Road and told them that a council of the tribe had decided that to them should belong all the land in that region until the Great Spirit should call them to the Eternal Wilderness. At the moment the sun was rising in the east, so the young men named the spot Auf-gehende Taune, or Rising Sun.

On March 24, 1703, the proprietors of the Indian grant, which had been confirmed by William Penn, were married. They settled at Rising Sun. Eight years later the Old York Road was opened, and forty-three years later Mary Davis bought thirty-eight acres at the forks of the roads, and opened Rising Sun Inn.

Hotchkin quotes a local historian who gives a pleas-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

ing picture of events on the road since its first opening, "the removal of rocks, trees and stumps; the building of bridges, and the covering of the surface with stone. The changes, too, in travel, at first on horseback, then the cart, the two and four horse team, the gig, the stage coach, the elliptic-spring market wagon and carriage. The surprising change, likewise, in the people—groups of Indians, negro slaves, and redemptioners, sold for their passage, and brought out from the city by their masters, all gone! The like to pass over it no more."

Samuel Breck has a passage which throws light on this reference to redemptioners. On August 1, 1817, he wrote:

Being a long time dissatisfied with some of my servants I went on board the ship John lately arrived with four hundred passengers. I saw the remains of a very fine cargo, consisting of healthy, good-looking men, women and children, and I purchased one German Swiss for Mr. Ross and two French Swiss for myself. My two servants come from Lausanne in Switzerland. . . . I gave for the woman seventy-six dollars, which is her passage money, with a purse of twenty dollars at the end of three years, if she serve me faithfully, clothing and maintenance of course. . . .

An advertisement in the Philadelphia *Mercury* in 1739 tells of one of the many redemptioners who were unwilling to wait for their freedom until the expiration of the stipulated term of years:

Ran-away on the 24th of June, from David Bush of Willing Town, a Servant Man named John Christian Travett, he is a Palatine, and came in this last Fall,

## THE OLD YORK ROAD

in Capt. John Stedman's Ship from Holland. He had on a blue Camblet Coat full trimmed and lined with White, a grey pair of breeches, white Cotton Stockings, a felt Hat, black flank hair and a black Cravet on, he is of a middle Stature, a down cast look, and Talks no English, had with him two pair of worsted Stockings, one Dutch Bible, and Prayer Book, a striped red and white Calimanco Jacket.

Whoever takes up and secures said Servant so that his Master may have him again, shall have Forty Shillings Reward and other reasonable Charges paid.

Neither fleeing redemptioners nor honest travelers had an easy time on the Old York Road, if weather conditions were the least bit bad. The deep black mould made excellent mud, and there were treacherous quicksands in many places. Farmers on their way to market were accustomed to go in parties, that one might help another when difficulties were encountered. Some who ventured to make the trip alone found it advisable to use four and perhaps six horses; even then they were sometimes badly mired. An old resident, quoted in Watson's Annals, declared that he saw once near Rising Sun Village "a team stalled, and that in endeavoring to draw out the fore horse with an iron chain to his head, it slipped, and the horse was so badly injured that he had to be killed." No wonder a boy was sometimes stationed at dangerous places to warn teamsters, and that fence rails were placed on end in the road as silent messengers of threatened disaster.

In 1803 steps were taken to correct these conditions; the turnpike was authorized and construction

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

begun at once on the section from Rising Sun to the Red Lion Inn at Willow Grove.

The first home of importance on the old road was Stenton, the seat of James Logan, located close to the present Logan Station on the Reading. His property extended along the road a distance of one mile. The Indian trail from the interior led past this front. Dusky visitors to the mansion were numerous and their stay was frequently prolonged.

At one time the Indians had a camp on the grounds. James Logan was president of the Council, they had business with him, and they thought they were justified in remaining near their friend, making free of his grounds and house, and living on his bounty.

Sutcliffe tells of an amusing occurrence connected with such a visit paid to some place like Stenton, that kept open house to the red men. The story was told to him by a young woman:

She informed me, that her father was frequently in the practice of entertaining different parties of Indians, who came to Philadelphia on public business; and that having once invited a number of chiefs who were then in the city to breakfast, they came to the house rather earlier than the servants expected, accompanied by their interpreter. However, they were introduced into the breakfast room, where a servant was engaged in brightening up some of the brasswork about the fireplace, and were desired to sit down till the master made his appearance. They had not sat long, before one of the Indians made an observation in his own language, which the interpreter was desired to put into English. Unwillingly he explained:

"Look at that servant, how she labors at those

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andirons. I dare say, if we had come yesterday, we should have found her at the same employment, and if we came to-morrow morning, ten to one we should still find her at the same work. How foolish these white people are, thus to labour and toil about things which can come to no good purpose; certainly these white people must be fools."

Chief Wingohocking was one of the frequent visitors at Stenton. One day, while standing with Logan, by the stream that winds through the estate, the chief proposed an exchange of names, an Indian token of friendship. But Logan had a counter proposition: he would name the stream for the Indian. So, to this day, the creek is named Wingohocking.

In her sketch of Deborah Logan in "Worthy Women of Our First Century," Mrs. Sarah Butler Wister describes the old Stenton house, which is to-day open to the public, by the courtesy of the Society of Colonial Dames. She says:

Round the house there was the quiet stir and movement of a country place, with its large gardens full of old-fashioned flowers and fruits, its poultry yard and stables. The latter were connected with the house by an underground passage, which led to a concealed staircase and a door under the roof, like the priest's escape in some old English country seats.

The offices surrounded the main building, connected with it by brick courts and covered ways. They were all at the back, and so disposed as to enhance the picturesque and dignified air of the old mansion, the interior of which is as curious to modern eyes as it is imposing. One enters by a brick hall, opposite to which is the magnificent double staircase, while, right and left are lofty rooms covered with fine old-fashioned wood-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

work, in some of them the wainscot being carried up to the ceiling above the chimney-place, which in all the apartments was a vast opening set round with blue and white sculptured tiles of the most grotesque devices. There are corner cupboards, and in some of the rooms cupboards in arched niches over the mantel-piece, capital show-corners for the rare china and magnificent old silver which adorned the dinner table on state occasions. Half of the front of the house, in the second story, was taken up by one large room, the library of the book-loving masters of the place.

Elizabeth Drinker was one of the early residents on this road. In her journal she speaks often of her husband's plantation, located between the fifth and sixth milestones from Philadelphia, for which he paid £3146. This was not Henry Drinker's only investment in real estate, for he was one of the promoters and stockholders in a three thousand acre tract in Wayne county, where it was proposed to manufacture maple sugar, so as to avoid the use of sugar grown by slave labor. That the venture made a good start is shown by a letter from George Washington to Mr. Drinker, written on June 18, 1790, thanking him for a box of maple sugar, and wishing success to the promoters of the new venture, as something that might prove of considerable benefit to the country. The experiment was not successful; Mr. Drinker and his associates, so the story goes, did not learn until the investment had been made that the sap of the maple will flow only a few weeks in the year. The Maple Sugar Company went into bankruptcy, and Mr. Drinker was thrown back on his York Road farm.



**GRANGE FARM, NEAR TABOR STATION**  
 Built by Jan Luken, in 1708



**OLD FARM HOUSE**  
 Near the gate of Butler Place, the country home of Mr. Owen Winter



**HORSHAM MEETING HOUSE, 1803**



**GRAEME PARK**  
Built by Sir William Keith in 1721

## THE OLD YORK ROAD

One of the oldest houses in the vicinity of Philadelphia, Grange Farm, is located not far from the site of the York Road farm of Mr. Drinker. It may be found easily by those who turn to the right on Olney Avenue, and then to the left up the farm lane. The house is to the north of Tabor Station, between Grange and Chew streets. Jan Luken, the builder of the old farmhouse, came to Germantown in 1688. Ten years later he settled on his fifty acre farm on York Road and built a stone house and barn. The property was occupied by the Highland troops when the British were in Philadelphia. In the barn grain and forage were stored. Some years ago the roof of the barn was destroyed by fire, but the old walls are a part of the new barn.

On York Road, opposite Butler Place, the British built a barricade. There was a severe skirmish in one of the fields of Butler Place. The entrance to this old-fashioned home, now the property of Owen Wister, the novelist, is through the gateway on the left.

Mr. Wister's house was built in 1791. Major Butler bought it in 1810, and it has been in his family since that time. Mrs. Wister is Major Butler's great-granddaughter. Many men prominent in the early history of the country were entertained here, for Major Butler was for many years prominent in colonial and federal history. He had been a delegate to the Continental Congress and a representative to the Federal Convention. Later he was a United States Senator from South Carolina.

From Butler Place it is not far to Champlost Manor House, which was the residence of James Porteus in

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

1722. This may be reached by Green Lane. The name was not given to the estate until 1780, when George Fox, the owner, was in France. While a guest at the château of the Count de Champlost he was taken seriously ill, but was tenderly cared for by his host. On his return to America, in gratitude to his French host, he named his estate Champlost.

At Branchtown, near Cheltenham Avenue, on the Charles W. Wharton place, three curious irregular stones mark the graves of American soldiers who were shot by a British trooper who came upon them as they were sitting at a spring.

Until recently the home of Lucretia Mott, Roadside, stood in La Mott, near City Line. The little settlement named for her is now the sole reminder of this early advocate of equal rights for women.

As a Friend Lucretia Mott must have been interested in the history of The Ivy, the house built in 1682 by Richard Waln, which stands in the old village of Shoemakertown, now Ogontz, at the corner of Church Lane. This, it is said, is the oldest meeting place of Friends in or near Philadelphia still in existence, for "at a Mo. Meeting held at Sarah Sleary's, ye 3d of 10 mo. 1683 At urgent request of Some friends belonging to the Meeting A Meeting was Settled at New Cheltenham at the house of Richard Walln."

Two years later the house was made a monthly meeting place. In 1700 Abington Monthly Meeting succeeded Cheltenham Meeting until then held at The Ivy. Thus the Abington Meeting shares the distinction of age with the Abington Presbyterian Church, which dates from 1710.

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At Willow Grove the York Road branches. The left branch is called the Willow Grove and Doylestown Road. In 1722 this was opened from Willow Grove to the county line in Warrington. John Melish's Traveller's Directory of 1824 spoke of the entire road from Willow Grove to Easton as a section of the Old York Road.

Those who use the street cars will be able to follow the road as far as Willow Grove, and from there to take a car either to Doylestown on the left or to Hattboro on the right.

Those who elect to go toward Doylestown will find Horsham Meeting, one of the first objects of special interest after passing Willow Grove. The present building, erected in 1803, is the third meeting house built here. Visitors to the building will be interested in noting the difference between the front and rear rooms. The front room has been varnished, while in the rear room both pillars and pews have been left without adornment. The contrast is suggestive.

Not far from Horsham Meeting is Graeme Park, a mansion that dates back to 1721, the year the first Meeting House was built. This ancient house may be reached by way of the Keith Road, soon after passing the Meeting. This road was laid out through the forest, in 1722, to provide an outlet for the family at Graeme Park.

Sir William Keith, the original owner of the property, was appointed by Queen Anne Surveyor General of the royal customs in the American colonies. His salary of £500 per year enabled him to assume

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

great style, though he lived beyond his income, compelling his creditors to bear a large portion of his expenses. He lost his office when Queen Anne was succeeded by George I.

While he was out of office he came from Virginia to Philadelphia. Here friends became interested in him, and in 1716 the Council asked Hannah Penn to make him deputy governor of the Province of Pennsylvania. Some time later Mrs. Penn wrote to James Logan, one of Keith's sponsors, after seeing Keith in London:

Have at your request got William Keith commissioned by my husband, and appointed by the Crown, and with a general consent he now goes deputy governor over that province and territories. Though he was pretty much of a stranger to me, yet his prudent conduct, and obliging behavior, joined with your observation thereon, gave me and those concerned good hope that he will prove satisfactory. He is certainly an understanding man, and seems to have himself master of the affairs of your province, even beyond what we might expect in so short a time.

The new official borrowed money in England and brought his family to America. He had four sons and a step-daughter, Ann Diggs, who became the bride of Dr. Graeme, a traveling companion and relative of the deputy governor. After her marriage she continued to live in the home of her step-father.

Soon after coming to America Colonel Keith bought 1200 acres of land near Round Meadow Run, the present Willow Grove, nineteen miles from Philadelphia. Some of his friends thought he was foolish to go so far from the city, in the midst of a wilderness, but he

## THE OLD YORK ROAD

insisted that he would be able to make a charming home on his estate.

At once he began to build a house sixty by twenty-four feet, and three stories high, with walls two feet thick. The rooms were large and beautifully paneled, some of them from the floor to the high ceiling. For the fireplaces brick and tile were brought from England. Other features of note are the bull's-eye glass above the front door, the hole in the floor of the Governor's office upstairs, where he deposited his valuables, the hand-made lath in the attic, the stack chimneys, each with three flues, the bit of wall in front of the house which is a remnant of the old slave quarters, and the depression in the rear of the house, where there was at one time a lake, as shown in drawings of the house.

Crowning a gatepost before the farmhouse of the present owner of the property, Morris B. Penrose, is the curious mushroom-shaped boulder used by Sir William as a test of the strength of applicants for work. Those who could not lift the stone could not hope for employment.

For many years the mansion was open to visitors without restriction, but the privilege was abused. Vandals defaced the walls and the woodwork, and otherwise injured the property. For some time the doors have been locked, but they are opened to those who will apply at the farmhouse.

On this estate Colonel Keith lived in luxury until 1729. An inventory of his property shows that he had possessions as follows:

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Fourteen slaves, a silver punch bowl, ladle and strainer, four salvers, three casters and thirty-three spoons, seventy large pewter plates, fourteen smaller plates, six basins, six transports with covers, thirteen different sizes of bowls, six complete tea sets, two dozen chocolate cups, twenty dishes of various sizes, four dozen plates, six rings, one dozen fine coffee-cups, eighteen jars, twelve venison pots, six whitestone tea-sets, twelve mugs, six dozen plates, and twelve fine wine decanters, twenty-four Holland sheets, twenty common sheets, fifty tablecloths, twelve dozen napkins, sixteen bedsteads, one hundred and forty-four chairs, thirty-two tables, three clocks, fifteen looking-glasses, ten dozen knives and forks, four coach horses, seven saddle horses, six working horses, two mares and one colt, four oxen, fifteen cows, four bulls, six calves, thirty-one sheep and twenty hogs, a large glass coach, two Chaises, two wagons, one wain.

The owner of all these fine things was accustomed to drive over his own road toward Philadelphia in a manner in keeping with his state at Graeme Park. His coach and four, with outriders, was a sight of which the people never wearied.

In 1729 the spendthrift governor left for England, after mortgaging his farm and property to Dr. Graeme and deeding the estate to Mrs. Keith. Twenty years later he died in the Old Bailey, London, where he had been imprisoned for debt.

In 1739 Dr. Graeme bought the property for £760. He continued to live on the estate during the summer, though he made his home in Philadelphia during the winter, for this was more convenient to him, when he was a member of the Council and, later, when he

## THE OLD YORK ROAD

was one of the three justices of the Supreme Court. When his health failed he retired to Graeme Park.

In 1755 he wrote to Thomas Penn concerning the property, in whose development he took much pride:

I have a park which encloses three hundred acres of land, which is managed in a manner quite different from any I have seen here or elsewhere. I have double-ditched and double-hedged it in, and . . . I dare venture to say that no nobleman in England but would be proud to have it for his seat.

Dr. Graeme longed for the happiness of his daughter Elizabeth, and he dreamed of the day when she would follow him at Graeme Park. But when she made known her wish to marry Henry Hugh Ferguson, he opposed the marriage, for he felt the man was unworthy. However she listened to the adventurer's proposal of a secret marriage, and on April 21, 1772, she married him in Gloria Dei, Philadelphia. Then her husband urged her to confess her fault. Some months later she made up her mind to speak to her father when he returned from a walk in the garden. She told what followed:

I sat on the bench at the window and watched him coming up the avenue. It was a terrible task to prepare. I was in agony; at every step he was approaching nearer. As he reached the tenant house he fell and died. Had I told him the day before, as I thought of doing, I should have reproached myself for his death and gone crazy.

The repentant daughter wrote the epitaph that was placed on her father's tomb in Christ Churchyard, Philadelphia:

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The soul that lived within this Crumbling dust  
In every Act was Eminently just.  
Peaceful through Life, as peaceful, too, in death,  
Without one Pang, he rendered back his breath.

The years brought still greater sorrow to Mrs. Ferguson. Her husband wasted her substance, and during the Revolution he acted in such a manner that he was accused of high treason and the estate was seized. Later, by act of Assembly, it was restored to his wife. Her own loyalty she showed when she entertained General Washington while his army was encamped near by, October 21, 1777.

She did her best to fill her days with literary labors, and she became a leader among the more cultured people of the neighborhood, and of Philadelphia. Many famous men were guests in her home. In 1783 she became a patron of the Hatboro Library, sending such a large donation that a carpenter had to be employed to build extra shelves. This was quite an event in Hatboro.

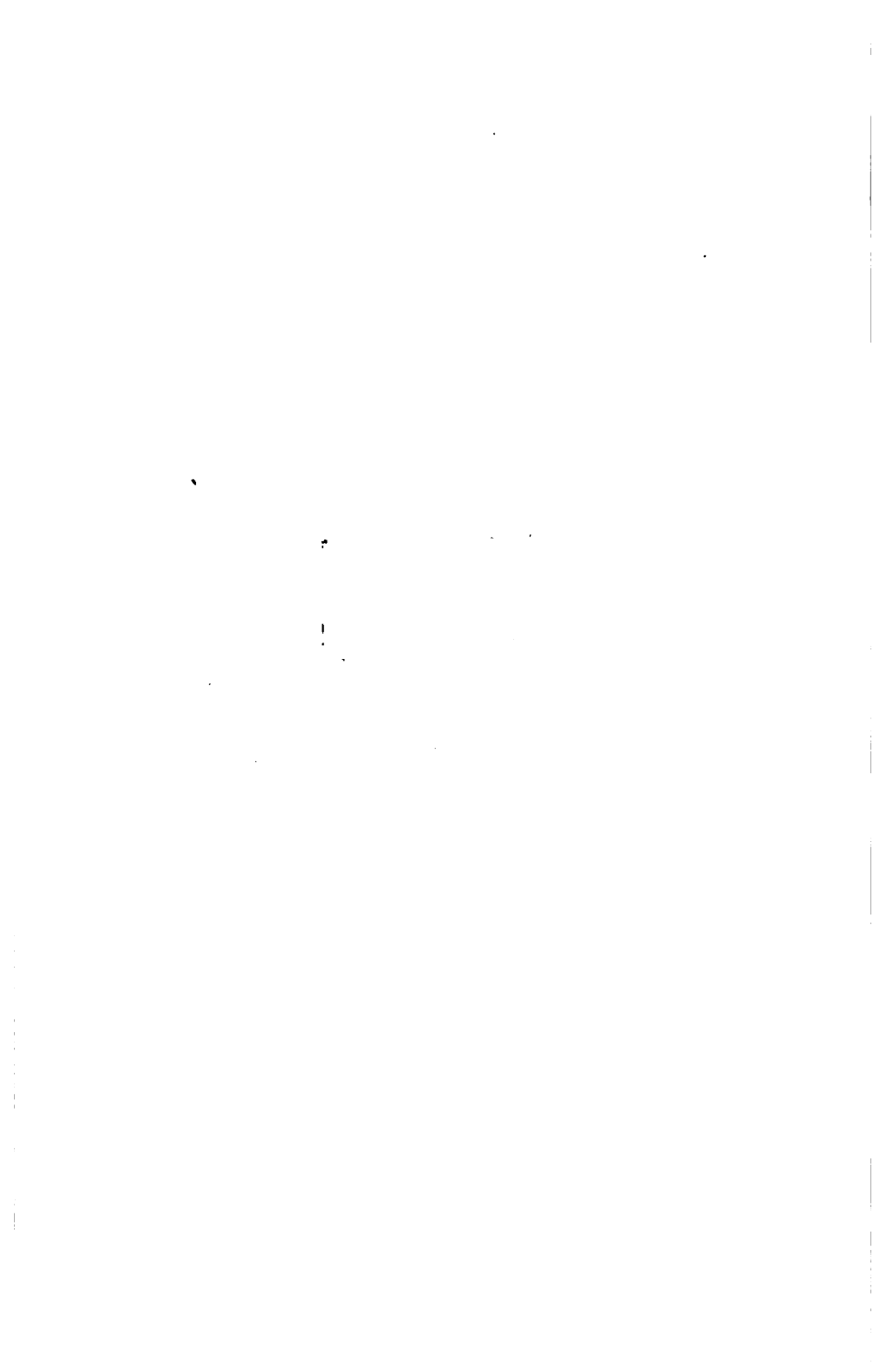
In 1791 she sold the property. Ten years later she died, broken-hearted. About the same time the estate came into the hands of the Penrose family.

Some distance beyond Graeme Park, toward Doylestown, at Halliwell, a picturesque barn in the rear of Horsham Hotel has a date stone telling that it was built by G. P. (George Palmer) in 1788.

Thirteen years later the overseers of the road built a stately stone bridge over the Neshaminy at Edisonville which bears the traffic as well as ever, and promises to stand for another hundred years.



BRIDGE OVER THE NESHAMINT, NEAR DOYLESTOWN



## THE OLD YORK ROAD

Two miles beyond Neshaminy Creek is Doylestown, a town built on a tract conveyed by William Penn to the Free Society of Traders in 1682. Originally this contained 20,000 acres. Two of the earliest residents on this tract were Jeremiah Langhorne and Joseph Kirkbride, who ran away from his master in England and came to America on the *Welcome*, with Penn. The name Doylestown was given to the place when William Doyle, in 1745, opened a tavern at a spot "between two great roads, one leading from Durham to Philadelphia," the other "From Wells' Ferry toward the Potomac."

Four miles from Doylestown, in Buckingham Township, is the grave of King Taminunt, or Chief Tammany, the Delaware Indian who was the friend of William Penn, of whom an early admirer said that "he never had his equal. He was in the highest degree endued with wisdom, virtue, prudence, charity, affability, meekness, hospitality—in short with every good and noble qualification that a human being may possess."

This friend of the early settlers, who signed many of the grants of land made to William Penn, was constituted by some of his early admirers the patron saint of America. His name is to-day best known because of its use by a celebrated New York political organization.

From Doylestown the Buckingham Pike may be taken three miles east to the main stem of the York Road at Centerville. From Centerville, twenty-seven miles from Philadelphia, the return trip may be made

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to Philadelphia, or the road may be followed to New Hope on the Delaware. For the sake of completeness this narrative will speak of the entire distance from Willow Grove to New Hope.

When Peter Kalm went over this road in September, 1748, its appearance and surroundings were quite different. He wrote in his "Travels into North America":

The country on both sides of the road was covered with a great forest. . . . As we went on in the wood, we continually saw at moderate distances little fields, which had been cleared of the wood. These farms were commonly very pretty, and a walk of trees frequently led from them to the high-road. The houses were all built of brick, or of the stone which is here everywhere to be met with. Every countryman, even though he were the poorest peasant, had an orchard with apples, peaches, chestnuts, walnuts, cherries, quinces, and such fruits, and sometimes we saw the vines climbing along them. The vallies were frequently provided with little brooks which contained a crystal stream.

In spite of the fact that there was so much forest in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, the price of wood was high. Elizabeth Drinker told of paying, in 1791, £1.2-6 for half a cord of hickory wood. Kalm said the reason firewood was dear was "because the great and high forest near the town is the property of some people of quality and fortune, who do not regard the money which they could make of them. . . . they leave the trees for times to come, expecting that wood will become much more scarce." When he wrote, the price for "hiccory" was eighteen shillings a cord.

More than fifty years after Kalm told of the for-

## THE OLD YORK ROAD

ests on the Old York Road, William Priest, another tourist, described with relish observations he had made while traveling:

The chief amusement of the country girls in winter is sleighing, of which they are passionately fond, so indeed are the whole sex in this Country. I never heard a woman speak of this diversion but with rapture. You have doubtless read a description of a sleigh, or sledge, as it is common in all northern countries, and can only be used on the snow. . . . The snow seldom lies on the ground more than seven or eight days together. The consequence is, that every moment that will admit of sleighing is seized on with avidity. The tavern and innkeepers are up all night, and the whole country is in motion. When the snow begins to fall, our planters' daughters provide hot sand, which at night they place in bags at the bottom of the sleigh. Their sweethearts attend with a couple of horses, and away they glide with astonishing velocity; visiting their friends for many miles around the Country. But in large towns, in order to have a sleighing frolic in style, it is necessary to provide a fiddler, who is placed at the head of the sleighs and plays all the way. At every inn they meet with on the road, the company alight and have a dance.

Probably one of the taverns frequently by these sleighing parties was the Crooked Billet, in Hatboro. This has been remodeled into a private dwelling. The gable end extends over the sidewalk on iron pillars. It was built in 1750 by John Dawson, who came from London, and kept a hat factory in the building. This industry gave the name to the town. Later the sign of a crooked billet of wood was hung before the door and travelers were welcomed. At one time a school

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

was held in the inn. General Washington, in a letter to Congress dated August 10, 1777, mentions the Crooked Billet Tavern, and the fact that he had taken refreshment there when on the way from Valley Forge to Trenton.

Near the southern limits of Hatboro is Loller Academy, founded by Robert Loller. He was a school-teacher, a surveyor, a colonel during the Revolutionary War, a member of the Assembly, and an Associate Judge of Montgomery County. At his death he made provision for the founding of "an academy or seminary of learning." The building was erected in 1801 at a cost of eleven thousand dollars. To-day it is used as a public school. Near the academy is the bridge over the Pennypack, built in 1780.

The academy was not the first gift to education in Hatboro. On August 2, 1755, at the Crooked Billet, four men agreed that the town must have a library. At this time there were not over eight or nine public libraries in the colonies, two of these being in Philadelphia. The town was small, and they knew that the beginning must be modest. But they were too wise to wait until there were more people who could be called on for gifts. At this preliminary meeting the four men present paid in forty-four pounds as a beginning.

The purpose of the library they proposed to found was thus announced:

Whereas, black and dark ignorance, with all the horrid concomitants that generally accompany or flow from it, does about this time greatly prevail in these

## THE OLD YORK ROAD

parts and no general scheme on foot for the promotion of knowledge and virtue, this, by some of the most serious and thinking part of the people however, was looked upon with anxious concern, and some proposals were made for forming a public library of select books, as the most likely way to promote knowledge and moral virtue and consequently to expel those gloomy clouds of ignorance and open profaneness so much abounding and give the gentle reader an agreeable taste for learning.

At once steps were taken to order books from a London bookseller, but it was August 12, 1756, a year and ten days from the date of the first subscription, that the volumes were received.

The records of the library tell what followed:

The books being come in, and the Directors having got room at Joshua Pott's to set them up, they advised the whole company to meet this day that the books might be delivered out by lot without the least appearance of partiality which was done to universal satisfaction.

In those days a book was a book, and anyone who cared to read at all devoured what came into his hands.

That there was much ceremony about becoming a member of the library company is shown by another early minute in the records:

On this day James Spencer having made it appear to the Directors that he hath an inclination to become a member in the place of his deceased father, this was laid before the board and by signing the articles of agreement and paying the subscription he became a partner and a member also.

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Robert Loller became a member in 1787. Through him the library was incorporated in May of that year. The next advance steps were the purchase of a lot and the erection of a building. The present building was completed in 1851.

Perhaps some of the officers in the Continental army were early patrons of the library, for Hatboro was a center of operations for some time during the early months of 1778. While Washington was at Valley Forge he commissioned General Lacey to see that the country between the Delaware and the Schuylkill rivers, a distance of thirty miles from the city, was thoroughly patrolled, so as to prevent the entrance of supplies into Philadelphia while it was in the hands of the British. General Lacey's headquarters were at Graeme Park and his supply depot was at Doylestown. Later the Crooked Billet became headquarters.

A further task of moment was the guarding of the mills on the Neshaminy lest the large supplies of grain and flour prepared for Washington's men should be seized by foraging parties of the enemy.

The instructions given to scouting parties were necessarily severe:

If your party should meet with any people going to market, or any persons whatever going to the city, and they endeavor to make their escape, you will order your men to fire on the villains. You will leave them on the roads, their bodies and their marketing lying together.

In April four hundred militia were encamped on the York Road above Hatboro. The commander's



OLD BARN AT HALLIWELL, 1788



OLD FARM HOUSE, BETWEEN DOYLESTOWN AND CENTERVILLE



**THE LIBRARY AT HATBORO, FOUNDED AUGUST 2, 1755**



**OLD FARM HOUSE, NEAR NORRITON ROAD**

## THE OLD YORK ROAD

plan to prevent a surprise by the enemy miscarried. General Lacey was in bed when a body of British, who had approached from Philadelphia by way of Fox Chase, were discovered within two hundred yards. Later it was found that another party had stolen over to Horsham, to cut off the retreat of the Americans. In the retreat and battle that followed, many men were killed.

In the northern limits of Hatboro, by the side of the road, is a monument which bears this inscription:

Crooked Billet Battle

May 1st, 1778

General John Lacey Commanded  
the American Patriots, who were  
here engaged in the conflict  
for Independence.

About seven years after the engagement commemorated by this monument, a hero of peace did something not far away of which information is given on a tablet fixed to the fence by the roadside:

John Fitch Here  
Conceived the idea of the  
first steamboat with  
Sidewheels  
on a pond below Davis-  
ville in 1785.

This experiment paved the way for a trial of which Rembrandt Peale told in a letter to a friend written on July 13, 1848:

In the spring of 1785, hearing there was something curious to be seen at the floating bridge on the Schuylkill at Market Street, I eagerly ran to the spot, where

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

I found a few persons collected and eagerly gazing at a shallop at anchor below the bridge with about 20 persons on board. On the deck was a small furnace, and machinery connected with a coupling crank, projecting over the stern to give motion to three or four paddles, resembling snow shovels, which hung into the water. When all was ready, and the power of steam was made to act, by means of which I was then ignorant, knowing nothing of the piston except in the common pump, the paddles began to work, pressing against the water backward as they rose, and the boat, to my great delight, moved against the tide, without wind or hand, but in a few minutes it ran aground at an angle of the river, owing to the difficulty of managing the unwieldy rudder, which projected eight or ten feet. It was soon backed off and proceeded slowly to its destination at Gray's Ferry. So far it must have been satisfactory to Mr. Fitch in this his first public experiment.

Later experiments were still more successful, and soon Fitch's boats were running regularly on the Delaware. But difficulties of various kinds followed, and the boats ceased to run.

Another reminder of the days when the improvements that make life pleasant to-day were in their infancy is to be seen on the farm of John S. Engart, at Norriton road. In the rear of the farmhouse is a little frame building, weather-worn and falling into ruins, where the children of the neighborhood used to gather for instruction in the days before the organization of the first free schools. It was the custom then to have subscription schools, where the expense would be shared by those benefited.

The picturesque house near the old school attracts

## THE OLD YORK ROAD

the attention of the visitor by its semicircular pillared veranda, and because of the curious cave house before the front door.

The most famous school building in early Pennsylvania, the Log College of Gilbert Tennent, was located about a mile north of Hartsville. The building has entirely disappeared, but the work done by the modest institution has had its effect through all the years since it was opened in 1727. Many ministers were educated here, at a time when there was no opportunity at any other place within reach to secure the needed preparation for the work. About the time the Log College closed Princeton College began its work. While it cannot be said that Princeton is a direct outgrowth of the Log College, it is certain that the school at Hartsville paved the way for the permanent institution.

Gilbert Tennent supported himself by farming and preaching at Neshaminy Presbyterian Church, a mile from Hartsville, on the Neshaminy. This church was founded in 1710, and the building was erected in 1743, though it was remodeled in 1842. Four years before this building was occupied, George Whitefield, the great evangelist, wrote in his Journal:

I set out for the Neshaminy, twenty miles distant from Trent Town, where old Mr. Tennent lives, and where I was to preach to-day, according to appointment. About twelve o'clock we came thither, and found about three thousand people gathered together in the meeting-house yard.

The church on the Neshaminy is now called Neshaminy of Warwick. In the village is Neshaminy of

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Warminster Church. In early days a disagreement of the members was followed by an amicable division of the property.

Some distance beyond the church in the village the York Road crosses the Little Neshaminy on an old-time covered bridge, and then passes the farmhouse of R. Sherman Robbins, built by William Keith in 1763. On the front wall of the house is a tablet bearing this inscription:

In this House Washington had  
his Headquarters from August 10 to  
August 23, 1777, with 13,000 men  
encamped near.  
Here the Marquis de Lafayette  
first joined the army.

This tablet erected by the  
Bucks Co. Historical Society, 1897.

This camp on the Little Neshaminy was noteworthy because here the army remained longer than at any other spot in Pennsylvania except Valley Forge and Whitemarsh; because Alexander Hamilton and John Marshall and James Monroe were among the officers; because here the flag adopted by Congress June 14, 1777, was first carried by the Continental Army; because here Washington felt it necessary to write to Benjamin Franklin, then in Paris, asking him to discourage the coming to America of European officers, lest it become necessary to refuse to employ them, or to employ them at the expense of one-half of the officers of the army.

The appearance of the soldiers when Lafayette came

## THE OLD YORK ROAD

to this camp has been described in Lafayette's Memoirs in these vivid words:

About eleven thousand men, ill armed and still worse clothed, presented a strange spectacle to the eye of the young Frenchman: their clothes were parti-colored, and many of them were almost naked; the best clad wore hunting shirts, large grey linen coats which were much used in Carolina. . . . In spite of these disadvantages, the soldiers were fine, and the officers zealous; virtue stood in place of service, and each day added both to experience and discipline.

On August 23, learning that the British fleet, on whose movements he had been waiting, was probably going north, Washington moved down Old York Road, and encamped near Nicetown. That evening from his headquarters at Stenton he issued a general order:

The army is to remove precisely at 4 o'clock in the morning, if it should not rain. . . . The army is to march in one column through the City of Philadelphia, going in at and marching down Front Street to Chestnut, and up Chestnut to the Common. A small halt is to be made about one mile this side of the city until the rear is clear up and the line in proper order.

When Washington's men passed down the York Road they must have seen Buckingham Meeting-House on the hill beyond Buckingham Road. This meeting, built in 1763, was used as a hospital when Washington was at Neshaminy. Many soldiers were buried here.

The Indians called this region "The Vale of La Haska." Perhaps the most pleasing view is from the slope near "Ingham's Great Spring," as John Melish called it in 1822. The lake on the right below the

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

spring and the old stone house behind the gnarled tree are features in an unusual landscape.

In early days the York Road led to Coryell's Ferry on the Delaware, where Emmanuel Coryell carried travelers across the river. In 1732 he applied for the exclusive right of keeping ferry for a distance of three miles above and three miles below this point. Thirteen years earlier the ferry was operated by John Wells.

While at Coryell's Ferry Washington planned some of the important movements that made this section famous. It is said that at a conference with his generals here he decided on the Battle of Trenton. From "Headquarters near Coryell's" (probably in Lambertville, New Jersey, opposite) the Commander-in-Chief wrote to Major General Arnold on June 22, 1778, that nearly all his troops had passed safely over the river. "As soon as we have cleaned the arms and can get matters in train," he wrote, "we propose moving towards Princeton, in order to avail ourselves of any favorable occasions that may present themselves, for attacking or engaging the enemy."

The name Lambertville was given to the settlement on the New Jersey side of the river in 1812, at the request of Hon. John Lambert, made to the Post Office Department. Abram Coryell, son of Emmanuel, the proprietor of the ferry house on the New Jersey side, was indignant; for some time he persisted in referring to the place as "Lambert's Villainy."

John Coryell, brother of Abram, was proprietor of the ferry on the Pennsylvania side at this period, but it is not recorded that he interposed objections to the



**ABANDONED FARM HOUSE, BETWEEN OLD YORK ROAD  
AND BUCKINGHAM STATION**  
A study in gables and chimneys



**THE BENJAMIN PARRY HOUSE AT NEW HOPE (CORYELL'S FERRY), 1784**



**THE NEELY HOUSE, NEAR NEW HOPE, 1737**  
Occupied by some of Washington's officers just before the battle of Trenton

## THE OLD YORK ROAD

substitution of the name New Hope for Coryell's Ferry. The change was made when Benjamin Parry, who owned mills in New Jersey that were destroyed by fire, replaced them by mills at Coryell's Ferry, which he called New Hope, as an expression of his desire for the future.

In 1784 Mr. Parry built a fine stone mansion near the ferry landing. To-day the place is the home of Richard Randolph Parry, third in direct succession from the builder.

From New Hope to Trenton a trolley runs along the historic New Hope Road, passing, within two miles of New Hope, the abandoned Neeley house, built in 1757, where were quartered, just before the Battle of Trenton, Lieutenant James Monroe, later the fifth President of the United States, and other officers, including Captain James Moore, who died there and was buried near by.

At Taylorsville, the next ferry below the Meeting House, a monument calls attention to the fact that here Washington and his men began the night crossing of the Delaware amid the ice floes, and so began the movement that crowned with glory expeditions centering about the Old York Road.

Just before the crossing of the Delaware, a Philadelphia friend spent an hour with the Commander-in-Chief at his headquarters near the Delaware. He told later of his impressions of Washington:

He appeared much depressed and lamented the ragged and dissolving state of his army in affecting terms. I gave him assurance of the disposition of

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

Congress to support him, under his present difficulties and distresses. While I was talking to him I observed him to play with his pen and ink upon several small pieces of paper. One of these by accident fell upon the floor near my feet. I was struck with the inscription upon it. It was, "Victory or death."

"Victory or death" was the countersign of the American troops at the Battle of Trenton.

## XI

### TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

**T**HE first portion of what became the King's Road to New York was in use in 1677. In 1681 overseers were appointed by the Court at Upland to repair the highway from Bristol to the Falls of the Delaware (Trenton). On the 22d of 6th month, 1700, William Penn wrote to James Logan asking him to "urge the justices about the bridge at Pannepeck and Poquessin that he might be able to come to the city." On November 19, 1686, at a meeting held in Philadelphia, the Provincial Council ordered the road called the King's Highway to be laid out to Morrisville. This was the first public road surveyed in Bucks County.

There was no regular transportation line along the road until 1725. In that year an enterprising man advertised that four wheel chairs would be run, on notice to the proprietor, from the Three Tuns tavern, on Chestnut street, between Second and Third streets, all the way to Frankford. The fare was to be ten shillings. At intervals through the next thirty years announcement was made of further ventures in transportation until it became possible to go all the way from Philadelphia to New York by stage wagons. The first stage coach through from Philadelphia to New York began to run in 1756; the time required was three days.

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

In 1783 Johann Schoepf wrote:

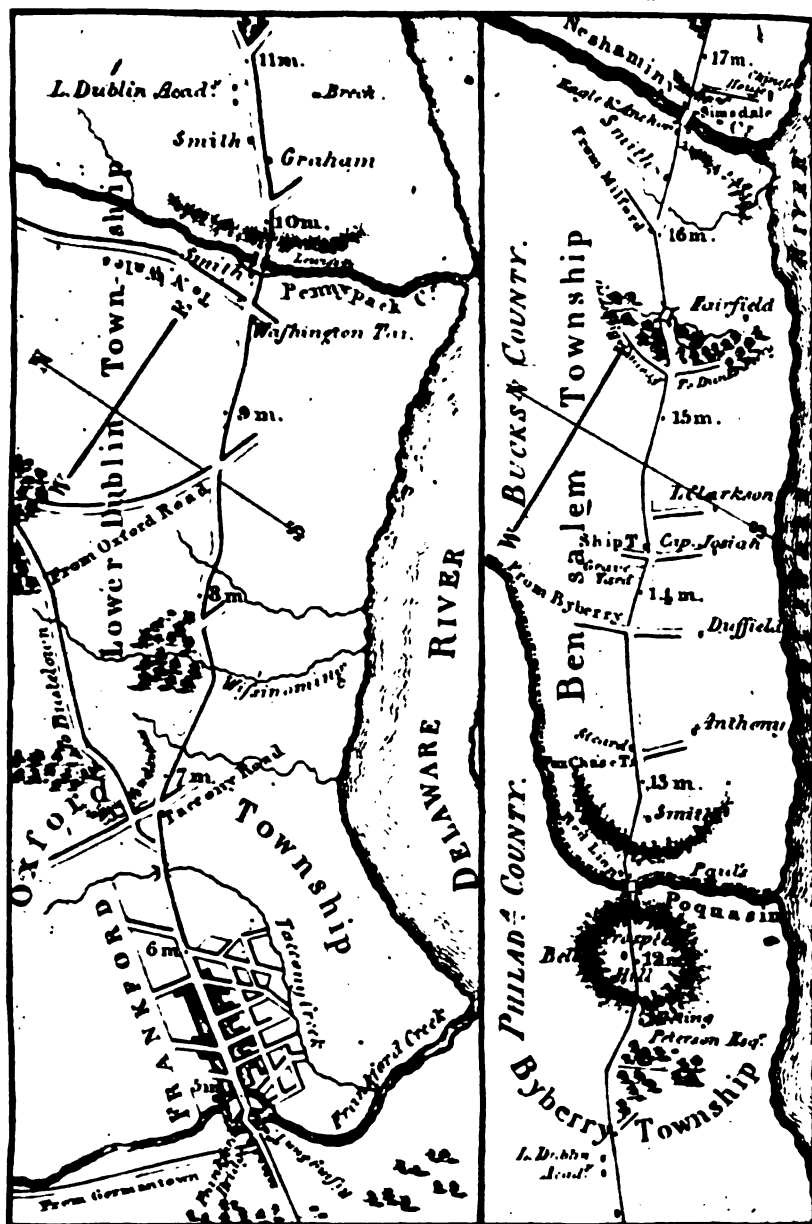
A diligence known as the Flying Machine makes daily trips between Philadelphia and New York, covering the distance of 90 miles in one day, even in the hottest weather, but at the expense of the horses, only three times changed in the journey. Thus the last trip two horses died in harness, and four others were jaded. These flying machines are in reality only large wooden carts with tops, light to be sure, but neither convenient nor of neat appearance. They carry from ten to twelve passengers, are drawn by four horses only, and go very fast. The charge for the journey is 5-6 Spanish dollars the passenger.

In 1819 there were fourteen regular lines in operation between the cities. One of these, the Citizens' Line, advertised in this way:

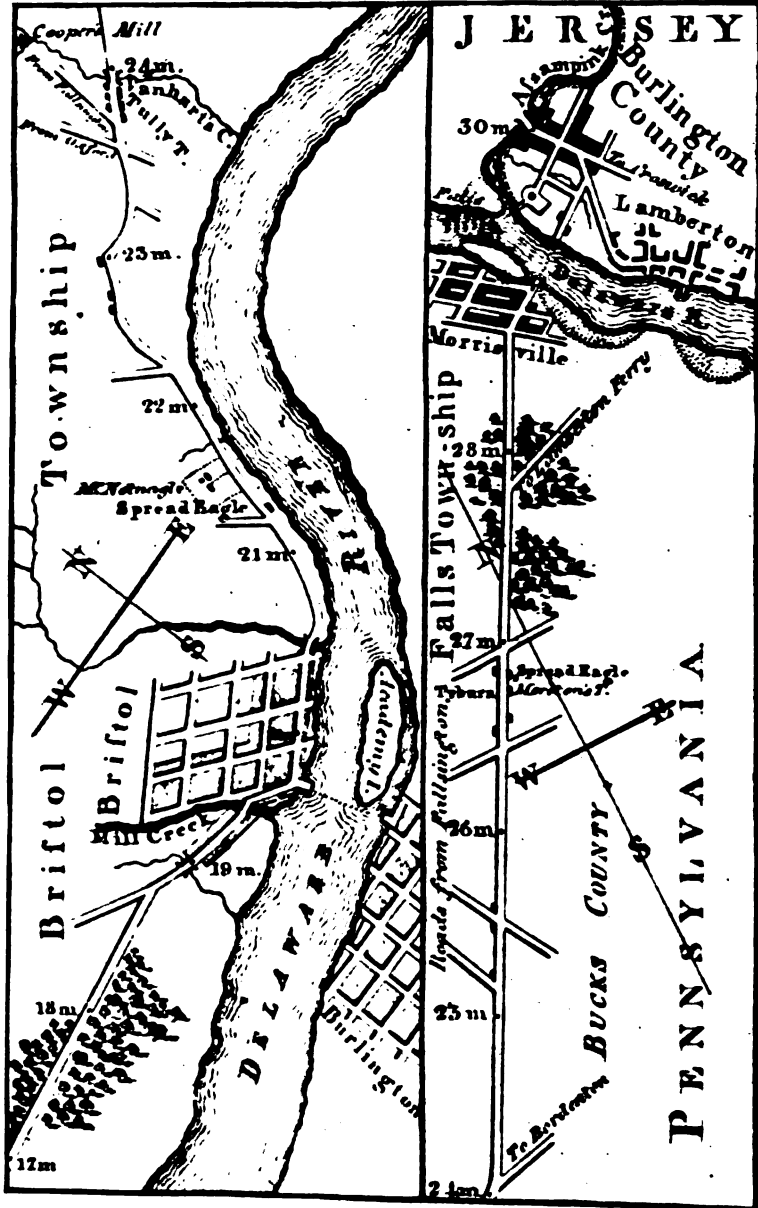
For the express accommodation of the citizens of Philadelphia and New York the subscribers offer for their patronage a Line of Coaches, which for comfort and security shall not be surpassed by any line of coaches on the continent, to leave the U. S. Mail Coach office, 30 South Third Street, daily at 5 o'clock and arrive at New York the same day in *The Coach*, which will cross the North River by Steam Boats. This Line will be under the same direction as the Mail Lines, and will carry *six passengers only inside*, and for 40 dollars the Coach can be taken by a party, who shall not be disturbed by way passengers.

This was thought to be rapid transit, but it was slow in comparison to what was prophesied in 1814 by Oliver Evans, a Philadelphia merchant. He declared:

The time will come when people will travel in stages moved by steam engines at fifteen to twenty miles an hour. A passenger will leave Washington in the morn-



SECTIONS OF ROAD MAP FROM PHILADELPHIA TO NEW YORK  
 From "The Traveller's Directory," S. S. Moore and T. W. Jones, 1802  
 (Continued on reverse side)



## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

ing, breakfast in Baltimore, dine at Philadelphia, and sup at New York on the same day. Railways will be built of wood or iron, or on smooth paths of broken stone or gravel, to travel as well by night as by day. A steam engine will drive a carriage one hundred and eighty miles in twelve hours. Engines will drive boats ten or twelve miles an hour, and hundreds of boats will be run on the Mississippi and other waters, as was prophesied thirty years ago by Fitch.

He attempted to prove the practicability of the steam carriage by building his curious Oructor Amphibolis, or Amphibious Digger, by means of which the Board of Health was to clean the docks. But he was years ahead of the time, and both his invention and his theories were ignored.

Travel became easier when the road was made a turnpike. In 1803 a company was chartered to complete the road to the ferry at Morrisville, though the work was not finished until 1812. The first bridge at this point was not built until 1806. This was the second covered bridge in America. The cost of the road was \$209,300.

The tolls on this turnpike and on the road between Trenton and New York, and the charges on the ferry boats, were heavy. In 1800 the tolls on a coach from Philadelphia to New York were five dollars and a half. No wonder the turnpike paid a ten per cent dividend!

One of the early industries on the Bristol Road was the transportation of powder from the warehouse built by William Chancellor, at the direction of the Council, beyond the city limits, at the edge of a swamp. Here

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

all the gunpowder brought to the city was to be stored. Chancellor was required to be on hand two hours each morning and two hours each afternoon, to receive or deliver casks. It was provided that he should have twelve pence per barrel per month for his services. As there was a penalty of £12 for keeping elsewhere within two miles of the city a quantity of powder greater than twelve pounds, Chancellor had a fair income, and the carters who carried the powder to and from the city were in demand, though they were not at all willing to take the risk.

History tells of other travelers on this old road who did not move with as much deliberation as the powder carriers. At five o'clock in the evening of April 24, 1775, an express rider startled the people of Frankford by the tidings of the Battle of Lexington. He had ridden from Boston in five days, and had come from New York since two o'clock that morning.

Eight years later, on December 8, 1783, there was a triumphal procession at the same point; George Washington had come to town. The *Pennsylvania Packet* of December 9 told the story:

His Excellency was met at Frankfort, by the President of this State, the honorable the financiers, generals St. Clair and Hand, the Philadelphia troop of horse, and a number of the citizens, who had the pleasure of conducting the General into the city. His arrival was announced by a discharge of cannon, the bells were rang, and the people testified their satisfaction, at once more seeing their illustrious chief, by repeated acclamations.

In and round Frankford are many homes that

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

speaking eloquently of those days when history was made. One of these, Cedar Grove, at Harrowgate, on Tabor Road, close to the turnpike, was built by Mrs. Joseph Paschall in 1748. The first owner of the land on which the house stands was Thomas Coates, a Friend, who came to Philadelphia in 1683, but left for England in 1691, when word reached him that his brother-in-law, George Palmer, had been taken prisoner by Algerian pirates who held him for ransom. Soon after his return he planned for a home of his own, as is evident from this notice:

At a Monthly meeting at the home of Robert Ewer the twenty-fifth day of the seventh month, 1696, Mary Sibthorp and Joan Forrest presented Thomas Coate and Beulah Jacobs a second time to this Meeting, and, after inquiry, nothing appeared to obstruct the proceeding, they were left to consummate their Marriage in the face of God.

In 1714 Mr. Coates bought land in Frankford and established a plantation. In 1748 his daughter built on part of the land two rooms on the first floor of the present Cedar Grove mansion, two rooms on the second floor, and the attic. This was thought to be sufficient, for her only purpose was to provide a sort of rest house for use during periodical visits to the plantation. But later, when she proposed to make a summer home here, the house was enlarged. The garden was a feature of special beauty. This was kept up till the house was abandoned in 1888 because of the encroachment of the railroad.

The mineral spring near Cedar Grove was a pop-

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

ular resort in the early days. To this came many travelers from the city and beyond.

On Powder Mill Lane is the early home of Commodore Stephen Decatur, who will always figure in American history because of his victories over the Algerian Pirates in the early years of the nineteenth century. The caretakers of the house proudly point to a pane of glass on which the name of Decatur was scratched with a diamond.

Waln Grove, located to the east of the Pennsylvania tracks near the Frankford Station, was also a mere plantation house when the first section was built by Robert Waln, a Philadelphia merchant, once a member of the Assembly. Later the house was enlarged. Then the merchant lived here and made regular trips to the city, in his family coach. This was provided with "a coachman in purple livery in front of the long body, swinging on the leathern strap, and two purple footmen standing on the footboard at the back." This house, also, has been abandoned.

A third abandoned house is Port Royal, not far from Waln Grove, on Tacony Street. Edward Stiles, the builder, named the house after his birthplace in Bermuda. The story is told of Mrs. Stiles that on December 6, 1777, as she was driving in a chaise to Philadelphia, from Port Royal, her only companion being a boy servant, she was overtaken by a troop of British Light Horse, who took from her both horse and chaise, so that she had to walk to the city.

An old mansion that may soon be sacrificed to the railroad is Chalkley Hall, located in the Y between



COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR HOUSE, POWDER MILL LANE, FRANKFORD



PORT ROYAL, TACONY STREET, FRANKFORD



**CHALKLEY HALL, FRANKFORD**  
The wing at the left dates from 1723



**BRIDGE OVER THE PENNYPACK, AT HOLMESBURG**  
Built in 1887

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

the New York Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the tracks leading to the Delaware bridge. The small wing was built before 1723, but the main part of the house dates from 1776. The stone of which the older portion was built was brought from England.

The first owner, Thomas Chalkley, was born in London in 1675, and came to Philadelphia in 1701. He was a merchant and a mariner, but in later life he gave more time to his travels from Meeting to Meeting as a preacher than to his business. He removed from the city to a small plantation at Frankford in 1723, "in order to be more retired and for health's sake." At the time of his removal he spoke as if he would be unable to travel much more, yet he made many other long trips, enduring great hardships. In 1724, for instance, he told this incident:

On the road my horse gave a sudden and violent start out of the path, and threw me down, and before I could get up again, he struck my face and on my right eye with his foot, being newly shod, which stunn'd me for the present; but as soon as I open'd that eye which was unhurt, I perceived that I lay on my back, under my horse's belly, with my head between his fore feet.

His wounds were nursed, at a farmhouse near by, for several days; then he was taken to his home at Frankford, "where," he wrote, "my longing wife with some surprize, received me very affectionately and thro her care and continual application, I recover'd, that I could see fairly well with spectacles, which I was obliged to use for some months."

Then he moralized a bit:

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

house the farmers and their wives were sitting in the cool interior, or under the piazzas and shady trees about their doors. I observed the men generally wore fine Holland shirts with the sleeves plaited, the women in clean, cool, white dresses, enjoying the ease and pleasure of domestic life, with few cares, less labor, and abounding plenty.

The milestones now on the road are not the stones that were seen by these old travelers; the present stones were placed by the Bristol Turnpike Company during the construction of the road in 1804 and later. An interesting story about these earlier stones, none of which have been located, is found in the minutes of the Philadelphia Contributionship:

May 16th 1764: Peter Reeve, Joseph Saunders, and Thomas Wharton, who were requested by the Board of Directors to apply the Fines arising from non-attendance of the Directors since the year 1761 in purchasing milestones, made the following report, viz:

"We the Subscribers beg leave to Report to the Directors of the Fire Insurance Office, that, Agreeable to their Request 'that we would procure a sufficient Number of Milestones and fix them on the Road leading to Trenton Ferry and apply to such persons as would be capable of Measuring the Distance, and placing them properly,' That you would pay the Cost and expence thereof out of the Fines that were paid by the Directors for Non attendance since the year 1761.

"We procured the Stones, and apply'd to John Lukins, Surveyor General, Philip Syng, Jacob Lewis, and Thomas Gordon, Gentn. to join us in measuring the Distance from Philadelphia, to the Edge of the River at the Ferry leading to Trenton, who Cheerfully undertook the Serving, and on the 15th Instant at 5 o Clo. in the Morning we began to Measure from the

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

Middle of Market Street in Front Street, and at the Distance of each Mile, affix'd or planted a Stone marked with proper Characters to describe the Distance from this City, and when arrived at the Ferry found it to be 29 Miles & 24 Chains to the Edge of the River, having passed thro' the New Road leading thro' Pennsylvania Manner, as it is the most direct and likely to be used, the distance being short'ned more than One mile.

"The Cost of the Stones, with the expence attending the planting them amounts to Thirty three pounds Seven shillings, and five pence, We having purchased two Stones more than was necessary, being numbd. 30 & 31 Gave them to Nathl. Parker who promised to fix them on the Road leading to New York."

Up to this time there were no milestones. In 1748 Peter Kalm said "the inhabitants only computed distances by guess."

A short distance beyond the ninth milestone is the old General Wayne Tavern. When such an inn was opened in the days of the stage coach's glory, the proprietor was apt to prepare some such announcement as the following, which was published in 1816 by the Washington Inn of Holmesburg:

Ye good and virtuous Americans, come! Whether business or pleasure be your object—Call and be refreshed at the sign of Washington. Here Money and merit will secure you respect and honor and a hearty welcome to choice liquors and to sumptuous fare. Is it cold? You shall find a comfortable fire. Is it warm? Sweet repose in a cool and grassy shade. In short, every exertion shall be made to grace the sign of the hero and statesman who was "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

Perhaps the man who wrote this was familiar with

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

the exuberant lines in "The Flourishing State of Pennsylvania," written in 1686 by Judge John Holme, who lived in this neighborhood. In the course of this long poem of strange meter, or no meter, he called attention to

The gardners of the soil, the cheapness of the land,  
The trees so abundant in variety

That scarcely any man can name them all;  
The fruits and nuts, strawberries and plumbs,  
Which pleaseth those well, who to eat them comes.

Beyond the River Road is an old estate noted eighty years ago for its luxuriant fruits and flowers. This is now the Edwin Forrest Home for Actors, but at that time it was the country seat of Caleb Cope, who bought it from Josiah W. Gibbs, to whom the estate came from the descendants of Judge Holme. Mr. Gibbs bought the property in 1810 and built the mansion. During Mr. Cope's ownership the grounds were planted with rare and beautiful flowers, shrubs and trees. Greenhouses were filled with blooming plants, there were luxuriant grape arbors, and at the end of the house was a stone wall banked with ferns and mosses. From far and near visitors came to this bower of beauty.

Holmesburg is located on a creek of many names. The English form is Pennepack, and the Indian meaning of the word is "deep, dead water." The earliest Swedish map called the stream Penischpaska Kil, while a variation was Penickpackakyl. William Penn in 1701 called it Pemmapecka.

The turnpike recrosses the stream on one of the oldest bridges in the country. In 1697 the stones were

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

laid, and ever since it has done its work well. It was widened when the trolley was built along the road, and the only part of the structure that has called for repair is the modern retaining wall.

On the bank of the creek a short distance toward the Delaware are the walls of a mill built the same year as the bridge. The stone for the walls was quarried near by, but the bricks used in its construction were imported from England. Until 1880 the mill was in use, vessels coming up the creek for cargoes of flour and corn meal. On October 11, 1880, it was burned, but the walls are as strong as ever.

For generations schoolboys crossed this bridge on their way to Lower Dublin Academy, a short distance beyond the bridge, within sight of the turnpike. Thomas Holme, William Penn's Surveyor General, was the founder of the school. When he died he left a legacy of £4 to be used for school purposes, or to put out some young man to learn a trade. Not until 1723 was any action taken by his executors. At that time an acre and a half was set aside for a school site, and a log schoolhouse was erected. This was used later as the residence of the principal, and it is now a part of the janitor's house, located beyond the present schoolhouse. In this primitive building Stephen Decatur went to school.

The Academy became so popular that a larger building was needed, and in 1794 steps were taken to provide funds for it. The Trustees were incorporated, and Governor Mifflin authorized a lottery. The profits from this were not satisfactory; though \$35,000

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

in tickets were sold, expenses and prizes used more than thirty-one thousand of the amount, and the Trustees looked with dissatisfaction on the thirty-eight hundred dollars remaining.

The new building was in use in 1800, though it was not completed until 1808. The cost was \$5,124.21. Included in the total were such expenses as "1 Qut of rum for the porters hauling loges," 2 shillings, and "7 Quts Rum, for the Raising," sixteen shillings and four pence.

It was required of pupils that they attend from eight to five daily with an intermission for lunch. Holidays were granted "every other Saturday, a week-during Harvest, the day of the general election, and the 25th of December, commonly called Christmas day."

Those who look at the academy building from the road think there is a clock in the front gable, but close inspection shows that a good place for a clock is boarded up. For many years there was a clock here, and it was the pride of all Holmesburg.

The story of this clock is interesting. Edward Duffield, a jeweler and clock-maker, had a store at Second and Arch Streets, Philadelphia, where Washington and Franklin were frequent visitors. During one of his visits Franklin, annoyed by the frequent interruption of those who came in to ask the time, suggested to the proprietor that he construct a clock with two faces, to be placed before the store in such a way that passersby on either street might see it. The suggestion was followed, and soon Duffield's clock was looked on as a standard timekeeper.

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

The clockmaker, who lived near the academy, was President of the Trustees, and when the new building was nearly completed he decided to give the clock to the institution. A place was made for it, and on October 20, 1802, the thirty pound shot used for a weight was raised and the clock began to keep time in the new location. There it remained until it was worn out.

Thomas Holme, who was responsible for the academy, is buried under the trees in the field back of the institution. The monument above his grave was built by the trustees.

The academy building is now the property of the school district, but the trustees, who maintain their organization because of the Thomas Holme Library, which was an outgrowth of the academy foundation, still hold their annual May meeting in the original academy building, a structure so low that a man of medium height feels that he must stoop if he would not strike the ceiling.

Lower Dublin Academy's first building was in its youth when the Red Lion Inn, across the Poquessing, was built. In 1730 Philip Amos applied for a license to keep a public-house "near Poquessing Creek, on the highway from Philadelphia to Bristol." Seventeen years later, when a survey of the road was ordered, it was noted that the Widow Amos had succeeded in control of the Red Lion. A tablet on the wall of the inn states that the delegates from Massachusetts to the first Continental Congress dined here on August 27, 1774.

Captain Benjamin Laxley, of the Philadelphia

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

artillery, once stopped here on his way to Amboy. Having started from Frankford at five o'clock in the morning, the men were hungry when they reached the inn at nine o'clock. A demand was made on the proprietor for breakfast, but he said that he did not have enough bread for five men; how then could he feed one hundred?

In 1783 Johann Schoepf, after passing many such inns as the Red Lion, wrote:

The taverns in the Country are recognizable, even at a distance, by a sort of gallows arrangement which stands out over the road and exhibits the patron of the house. So far we have observed many times the counterfeit presentment of Frederick the Second, King of Prussia, hung up in this way, that monarch having been a great favorite of the Americans ever since the war before the last. We still found a few Georges, let hang perhaps out of sympathy, but of Queens of England we saw a good many. We have as yet seen no King of France, but a number of Washingtons and still more numerous Benjamin Franklins—the latter makes a particularly alluring sign if everything else is as well kept.

A traveler who told of his journeys in this region in 1817 gave a good idea of the fare provided at such an inn as the Red Lion:

The innkeepers of America are, in most villages, what we call, vulgarly, "topping men," field officers of militia, with good farms attached to their taverns, so that they are apt to think, what perhaps in a newly-settled country is not very wide of the truth, that travelers rather receive than confer a favor by being accommodated at their houses. They always give us plentiful fare, particularly breakfast, where veal-cut-



ANDALUSIA, THE HOME OF MR. CHARLES J. BIDDLE



**BRIDGE OVER THE POQUESSING AT TORRESDALE**



**THE RED LION INN, ON THE POQUESSING, 1730**

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

lets, sweetmeats, cheese, eggs, and ham were most liberally set before us. Dinner is a little more than a repetition of breakfast, with spirits instead of coffee. I never heard wine called for. The American drink is a small cider. Rum, whiskey, and brandy are placed upon the table, and the use of these left to the discretion of the company, who seem rarely to abuse them. Tea is a meal of the same solid construction as breakfast, answering also for supper. The daughters of the host officiate at tea and breakfast, and generally wait at dinner.

William Ellery, who passed this way to Philadelphia, did not have such a pleasing experience. His comment at one roadside inn was:

Fared poorly and paid highly. The most noted Taverns do not always afford the best entertainment.

Not far from the Red Lion Inn on the Delaware is the beautiful estate Andalusia, whose first owner was John Craig, a Philadelphia merchant, who purchased it in 1794. His partner, a Spaniard named Sarmiento, suggested that the Spanish name Andalusia be given to it. The mansion was erected at once. It soon became a social center for Philadelphia people.

In 1811 Craig's only daughter married Nicholas Biddle, whose father won fame as a Revolutionary patriot, and as Vice President of the Commonwealth in 1776, when Franklin was president. During the residence at Andalusia of Mr. and Mrs. Biddle the house was enlarged, and the Grecian front was added by the same architect who designed the main building of Girard College.

The present owner of Andalusia, Charles J. Biddle,

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

preserves the old formal garden, surrounded on two sides by high, ivy-covered brick walls. A hedge-bordered path through the center of the garden dates from 1815. In the center of the garden is a tree under which, it is said, Daniel Webster more than once consulted Nicholas Biddle on affairs of state.

A legend popular in the neighborhood is that Blackbeard the Pirate buried treasure in the island near the mouth of the Poquessing. Many people have tried to prove the truth of the story by digging for the treasure, but as yet no one has succeeded in the attempt.

Opposite Andalusia is Penn Rhyn, the home of Mrs. Seton Henry. The mansion dates from 1744, when Abraham Bickley married Miss Shewell, sister of the wife of Benjamin West, the artist. At first he called the estate Belle Voir. The house was remodeled in 1798.

Beyond Penn Rhyn, on the Delaware, is the famous State in Schuylkill Fishing Club, organized in 1732, for social purposes, by leaders in the colony, including James Logan. The first club house was built on the Schuylkill, near the present Girard Avenue Bridge. The organization was the same as that of the Colony of Pennsylvania, and the club thought of itself as having colonial rights. An early proclamation was in this dignified form:

COLONY OF SCHUYLKILL ss.

To \_\_\_\_\_, SCHULKILLIAN,  
AND ALL OTHER SCHULKILLIANS  
WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

*Whereas* great quantities of rabbits, squirrels, pheas-

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

ants, partridges, and others of the game kind, have presumed to infest the coasts and territories of Schuylkill in a wild, bold and ungovernable manner;

THESE are therefore to authorize and require you, or any of you to make diligent search for the said rabbits, squirrels, pheasants, partridges, and others of the game kind in all suspected places where they may be found, and bring the respective bodies of so many as you shall find, before Justices, &c, at a general Court to be held on Thursday the fourth day of October next, there to be proceeded against as by the said court shall be adjudged, and for you or any of you so doing this shall be your sufficient warrant.

Witness, myself, the twenty-ninth day of September, in the twelfth year of my Government, and Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and forty-four.

THOMAS STRETCH.

(L. S.)

In 1747 the Colony built a Castle which cost £16, 7, 9. For the ground it was decreed that an annual rent of three fresh perch should be paid.

During the Revolution meetings were not held, but after the war the Colony was reorganized as the State in Schuylkill, having declared its independence of Great Britain. Fort St. David's, another fishing club on the Schuylkill, which had maintained the organization of a garrison, united with the State in Schuylkill.

The building of the Fairmount Dam destroyed the fishing at the original location, and in 1822 the castle was loaded on a barge and taken to Rambo's Rock, opposite Bartram's Gardens. Three years later Lafayette was the guest of the Club. He was told that

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

his visit completed his "tour of all the states in the union." Then he was made a member and signed the book.

For fifty years the Club remained at Gray's Ferry. Then, for twelve years, a temporary home at the mouth of the Wissahickon was occupied, but in 1888 the castle at Gray's Ferry was taken on a barge to the new location on the Delaware. Here the ancient castle was erected not far from the mansion long known as the Clock House, which was purchased by the State in Schuylkill.

A portion of this brick mansion dates from 1732. The name Clock House was given to it because of a circular window in the front gable, in which, for sixty years, a light burned on stormy nights for the guidance of the bargemen on the river. From the stream, in the daytime, the window looked like a huge clock.

The membership of the club that occupies this building, said to be the oldest English-speaking club in the world, is limited to thirty, with a few apprentices. It still observes the curious by-laws that have come down from colonial days. These state that an apprentice shall ring the alarm bell in the steeple of the Castle to summon the citizens to meeting when thereunto directed by the Governor or other presiding officer. "It is further decreed that the apprentices shall not take seats at the dinner table with the members and guests until after the second royal toast has been drunk, unless invited by the Governor."

Less than a mile from the State in Schuylkill, Dunk's Ferry Road leads directly to the river. Here is the



**PENN RHYN, 1749**  
**The home of Mrs. Seton Henry**



**THE OLD CLOCK HOUSE, 1732, AND THE CASTLE OF THE STATE-IN-SCHUTLKILL,  
 NEAR EDDINGTON**



BRISTOL COLLEGE, NEAR CROYDON

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

old Dunk's Ferry Hotel, which dates from 1733. In early days, when there was a popular crossing at this point, the hotel had many patrons. On December 12, 1776, General Washington asked that Dunk's Ferry be carefully guarded, lest the British should land there. When he was about to cross the Delaware on his way to surprise the Hessians at Trenton, the order was given that coöperating troops should cross the river at this point. An attempt was made, but "floating ice rendered the passage of the river impracticable," according to the report of the leader to whom the command was given.

Fortunately Washington was made of sterner stuff than the leader of the forces at Dunk's Ferry. Floating ice could not hold him back when he had made up his mind that the river must be crossed.

From Dunk's Ferry it is not far to Eddington, on the turnpike, where Neshaminy Creek (called Shammony by Poor Will's Almanac, in 1770) may be crossed by a bridge that is a trifle more substantial than the "indifferent floating bridge" of which the Traveller's Directory of 1802 told. Over this bridge the toll for man and horse was six cents, and for a coach and four horses thirty-seven and a half cents.

The first attempt to supplant the ferry by a bridge was made by John Butler, in 1773. He completed the approach for a floating bridge, but most of this was destroyed by a storm.

Many of the travelers who crossed the Neshaminy at this point traveled in the plebeian horse and chair. In 1767 Elizabeth Drinker told of an adventure she had when driving with a child in one of these vehicles:

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

A young fellow on a mad Colt galloped against our Mare with such force as occasioned my falling out of the Chair; having the child in my arms asleep, and endeavoring to save it, I fell with all my weight on my right foot, and hurt it so much that I was unable to set it to ye ground for upwards of 8 weeks. Ye child, through mercy, escaped unhurt. I have lately met with so many frights that I cannot bear to think of riding with any satisfaction.

Samuel Breck in 1789 described a chair vividly:

A friend lent me a sulky, which was nothing more than a common arm-chair placed on leather traces, and suspended over a couple of wheels. The whole carriage was scarcely heavier than a wheelbarrow.

When the Philadelphia and Trenton Railroad was chartered in 1832, both the law-makers and the promoters thought it might be necessary to continue such primitive means of transportation. This is evident from the fact that the company was authorized:

To place on the railroad machines, wagons, vehicles, carriages, and teams of any kind, and to transport goods and passengers, said road to be a public highway for conveyance of passengers, and transportation, under rates to be charged by the Company.

Probably, however, the people thought that such a roadway for their accustomed vehicles would be a vast improvement over the conditions described by a traveler long before the turnpike was built:

Stumps of trees, left uprooted for Time to consume, yet impede your progress even in the much frequented road between the two largest cities in the United States. Several miles immediately before you enter Trenton the road is so bad that the driver, with whom I chose

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

to sit, told me his horses stalled, that is, were for some time unable to drag the wagon over the worst places. He also said that the road had not been repaired within his memory.

Only eight years before the railroad was chartered Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, wrote to Mrs. Morse after a trip over the turnpike:

In the land carriage we occupied three stages over a very rough road. In crossing a small creek in a ferry-boat the stage ahead of ours left the boat a little too soon and came near upsetting in the water, which would have put the passengers into a dangerous situation. As it was, the water came into the carriage and wet some of the baggage. It was about an hour before they could get the stage out of the water.

Next came our turn. After traveling a few miles, the springs on one side gave way and let us down, almost upsetting us. We got out with difficulty and, in a few minutes, by putting a rail under one side, we proceeded on again, jocosely telling the passengers in the third stage that it was their turn next.

The good-natured prophecy was fulfilled, for later in the day, when the stage in which Mr. Morse was a passenger had halted, it was overtaken by the third stage, "with a rail under one side, having met with a similar accident a few miles after we left them."

In 1806 John Melish gave a sketch of travel conditions that should be preserved with the letter from Morse:

There had been an accident to the coach. A spring broke, and a rail was taken from a fence and stuck under the wagon to support the weight of the passengers. It was very usual to see on the roads at this time

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

vehicles from whose running gears fence rails and the trunks of small trees, often with the boughs still attached, were dragged along behind.

The weary passengers did not even have the comfort of seeing all the sights along the way; some of the most pleasing estates were located along byways. One such byway, China Lane, leads toward the Delaware from Croydon. At the end of the lane is China Hall, a wooden building, lined with brick, whose builder was Andreas Everardus Van Braam Houckgeest, who was once ambassador from Holland to China. William Penn transferred the property to William Noble in 1683. In these early days the estate was called Rocky Mount, and later Benger's Mount. It is said that Joseph Bonaparte, the King of Spain, who lived in Bordentown, New Jersey, after his exile from France, looked longingly at China Hall, but he was unable to buy it, because at that time a foreigner could not hold property in Pennsylvania.

Bonaparte was frequently seen in this neighborhood. Sometimes he would cross the river on his state barge, rowed by four men, with American and French flags flying fore and aft. At other times he drove over, by way of Trenton. On one of these visits he had an accident that might have been serious. While crossing a "fall back," the name given to a temporary ditch dug across the road for drainage purposes, the driver was thrown from his seat; Bonaparte jumped out hastily and fell on his head. A passing physician took the injured man to Bristol, and cared for him at the Delaware House.

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

Across the lane from China Hall is the noble building of Bristol College, abandoned and fast falling into ruins. The institution was opened in 1834 as a manual training school. One who has told of the early days of the school says that the students would stand in line before China Hall while the president would first review the crowds and then send off the road section and the farm section and the shop section. Later on this was the seat of a military school, and still later of a Friends' boarding school for boys. A companion school for girls was held in China Hall. During the Civil War the Bristol College became a government hospital.

Bristol College is a giddy young thing when compared with the town of Bristol. In 1681 Samuel Clift secured from Sir Edward Andros, Provincial Governor of New York, a grant of 262 acres including the present site of Bristol. There he made his home, some months before William Penn secured his grant from Charles II. In June, 1695, at a conference at the house of Phineas Pemberton, at the Falls of Delaware, "it was shown that the county had as yet no market house; that for this purpose the ferry opposite Burlington was regarded as a good location; that ways and streets had been projected there." So the governor and council were asked to alter or confirm streets and grant a weekly market. The request was pronounced "verie reasonable," and in 1696 the town plot of Bristol was laid down. Thus it became the third oldest town in Pennsylvania, Chester and Philadelphia only being older.

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

One of the early buildings in the new town was the Friends' Meeting House. In 1701 "it's concluded there be a good, substantial house built, either of brick or stone," and Friends were appointed to find "the convenientest place." The bricks for the original building were brought from England. Completed in 1713, the structure stood till 1728, when it was taken down and rebuilt. The work was not finished till 1756. During the Revolution the new building was used as a hospital. On September 15, 1778, four Friends were appointed "to get the meeting house cleared of the troops at the little end of the house so that it may be used to meet in."

When the turnpike to Trenton was to be built through the town, it was the intention to lay it out in the shortest and straightest possible manner. But the proprietors of four taverns on the main street petitioned that the route might be changed so as to pass these taverns. The directors agreed to make the change, provided the town would pay five thousand dollars toward the cost of the road.

An early visitor to Bristol, Alexander Mackraby, wrote in January, 1768, to Sir Philip Francis, concerning one of the pleasures of the road at the time, sleigh riding:

I had a very cheery one a few days ago. Seven sleighs with two ladies and two men in each, preceded by fiddlers on horseback, set out together upon a snow of about a foot deep on the roads, to a public house a few miles from town, where we danced, sung and romped, and eat and drank, and finish'd our frolic in two or three side boxes at the play. You can have



**CHINA HALL, NEAR CROYDON**



**BOLTON FARM, NEAR TULLYTOWN**

**The rear was built in 1890, the front dates from 1790; the country home of Mr. Effingham B. Morris**



**THE TOWN HALL, BRISTOL**  
Built to save a legacy of \$200

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

no idea of the pulse, seated with pretty women, mid-deep in snow, your body covered with fur and flannell, clear air, bright sunshine, and, spotless sky, horses galloping, every feeling turned to joy and jollity.

A few years later the residents of Bristol had other things to think of than frolics. All through the Revolution the town was a witness of stirring events. In 1775 many prisoners were brought here from Quebec. Some passed through Bristol to Easton, but many others were quartered on the town for some months. At this time there were but fifty houses in the village, so the presence of the foreigners created much excitement. During December, 1776, just before the Battle of Trenton, many soldiers were to be seen on Radcliffe Street. Lafayette, after receiving his wounds at Brandywine, was taken to Bethlehem by way of Bristol. During the British occupation of Philadelphia a company of loyalists took the town. And in September, 1781, the French and American armies tramped through Bristol on the way to meet Cornwallis in Virginia.

After the Revolution there was excitement of a different nature. The Bath Springs, just outside the borough limits, became famous among health-seekers and fashionable people both at home and abroad. They had been known as early as 1700, but the medicinal value of the water was not appreciated; early settlers spoke of it slightlyly as "that nasty water." In 1773 Dr. Rush recommended it as a cure for many diseases, yet for some years few visitors were attracted by the

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

springs. But when the people did begin to come, there was a rush:

The daily appearance of the old stage wagon, the arrival and departure of guests, the travel to and fro from the Bath Springs, the daily landing of the river boats, gave the old town the appearance of prosperity. Two race courses, one below Bristol, and the other at the Springs, enlivened the town.

The popularity of the resort was at its height in 1816, when a ball was held at the Springs in celebration of the close of the War of 1812. Visitors came from far and near.

Outside of the great, lumbering coach, which every family of means possessed in those days, the only means of conveyance was by stage. The turnpike between Philadelphia and Trenton had been completed but a short time and three rival lines of stages jolted the guests over the road.

The discovery of Saratoga Springs in 1822 and the State law closing the race track sounded the death knell of the Springs, though the bath houses were not removed until 1870.

The Bristol Town Hall on Radcliffe Street is a curious building with a curious story. In 1811 Samuel Scotton devised \$200 to the borough for the purchase of a town clock, the money to be paid provided the council should build a hall to receive the clock, within five years after the death of his wife. The widow lived for fifteen years, and the officials lost sight of the legacy during the interval. One day, four years and ten months after her death, the Burgess discovered the

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

record. Two valuable weeks were frittered away in a discussion of location. There were those who wanted the hall built so that travelers on the Delaware could see that Bristol had a town clock. When the present location on Radcliffe Street was decided on, but six weeks remained for the erection of the building. Operations were begun about the middle of November, 1831, and on December 31 the structure was roofed in, the legacy was paid, and the clock was secured. An early historian calculated that the town had spent \$3781 to secure a gift of \$200!

A six-mile ride from Bristol on the Beaver Dam Road leads to a house that antedates the founding of the borough. This is Bolton Farm, the country home of Effingham B. Morris, in whose possession are the original deeds from William Penn. The estate is one of the most beautiful in the vicinity of Philadelphia.

Bolton Farm was originally the property of Phineas Pemberton, who came from England on the *Submission*, sailing a few days later than William Penn. On November 17, 1683, he bought five hundred acres on the Delaware. At first he lived in a house near the Falls, built in 1690. The original house is the smaller portion of the present mansion. The larger portion was built in 1790. The property came into the Morris family through the marriage of Mary Pemberton to Anthony Morris, who was fifth in descent from the original settler of that name.

Much of the land between Tullytown and Morrisville, from the railroad to the river, was included in William Penn's Manor of Pennsbury, which he laid

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

out in 1683. On the bank of the river, opposite Newbold Island, he built a mansion at a cost of £7000, of materials imported from England. Here he lived, but a few months. In 1701 he left the Manor, never to return. The mansion was torn down just before the Revolution. Its site was probably about where the farmhouse of William Leedom now stands. To reach this point, follow the lower or river road out of Tullytown, and take the fourth lane on the right. The turnpike may be regained by a road that leads directly to Morrisville.

From the site of the Manor of Pennsbury to Morrisville the distance is short. In Morrisville, near the main business corner, is the house where George Clymer died. He was one of the first and foremost in opposition to Great Britain, a member of the Council of Safety, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, Continental Treasurer, and member of Congress. At the time of his death, January 23, 1813, the house was the property of his son.

Near the river end of the street on which is the bridge over the canal, is an inn, now closed, the rear portion of which dates from before the Revolution. In this old portion Washington and many of his generals, as well as countless men of prominence in the colonies, must have dined when on their way to or from Philadelphia, for the inn was located near the entrance to the ferry.

Judging from the accounts of some early travelers, many of those who used this ferry at Morrisville thought it a dangerous passage.

## TO BRISTOL AND TRENTON

John Bernard wrote in 1797:

Our enjoyment of this ride was interrupted by an event which had nearly proved a very awful coincidence. On crossing the ferry at Trenton, in one of those flat-bottomed, low-sided, Dutch floats called scows, Morris began to relate the circumstances of having lost his first wife in this river some twenty years before, through the four horses of the stage taking fright, leaping over, and dragging the coach after them; the rapidity of the tide and the weight of the vehicle sending it to the bottom with more than half the passengers. He had scarcely concluded this horrifying narration when the square sail of the boat, flapping suddenly in the leader's faces, like a shot over they instantly sprang, and, but for the dexterity of the blacks in cutting their traces, there is no doubt we should have shared the fate we had just heard described.

Robert Sutcliffe also had an experience that was near to tragedy:

Our coachman was unable to see his way, in driving into the ferry boat, and the wheels on one side of the carriage passing into the boat whilst those on the other side went into the Delaware, we narrowly escaped a plunge into the water. . . . We all got out of the carriage into the boat as well as we could; which was no very easy task, as it was quite dark, and we were without lamp or candle. The driver putting back his horses, got clear of the boat, and in his second attempt drove fairly into it, and we crossed the river without further accident.

At about the same time the Traveller's Directory gave a better account of the crossing. Although this

## OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA

was used every day by five four-horse stages between Philadelphia and New York, "besides a great number of private carriages, chaises, horses, &c," the ferry boats made the trip "with the greatest safety from shore to shore, by means of poles, &c."

Fortunately the optimist follows hard on the heels of the pessimist, not only on the Bristol turnpike, but on all roads, and at all times.

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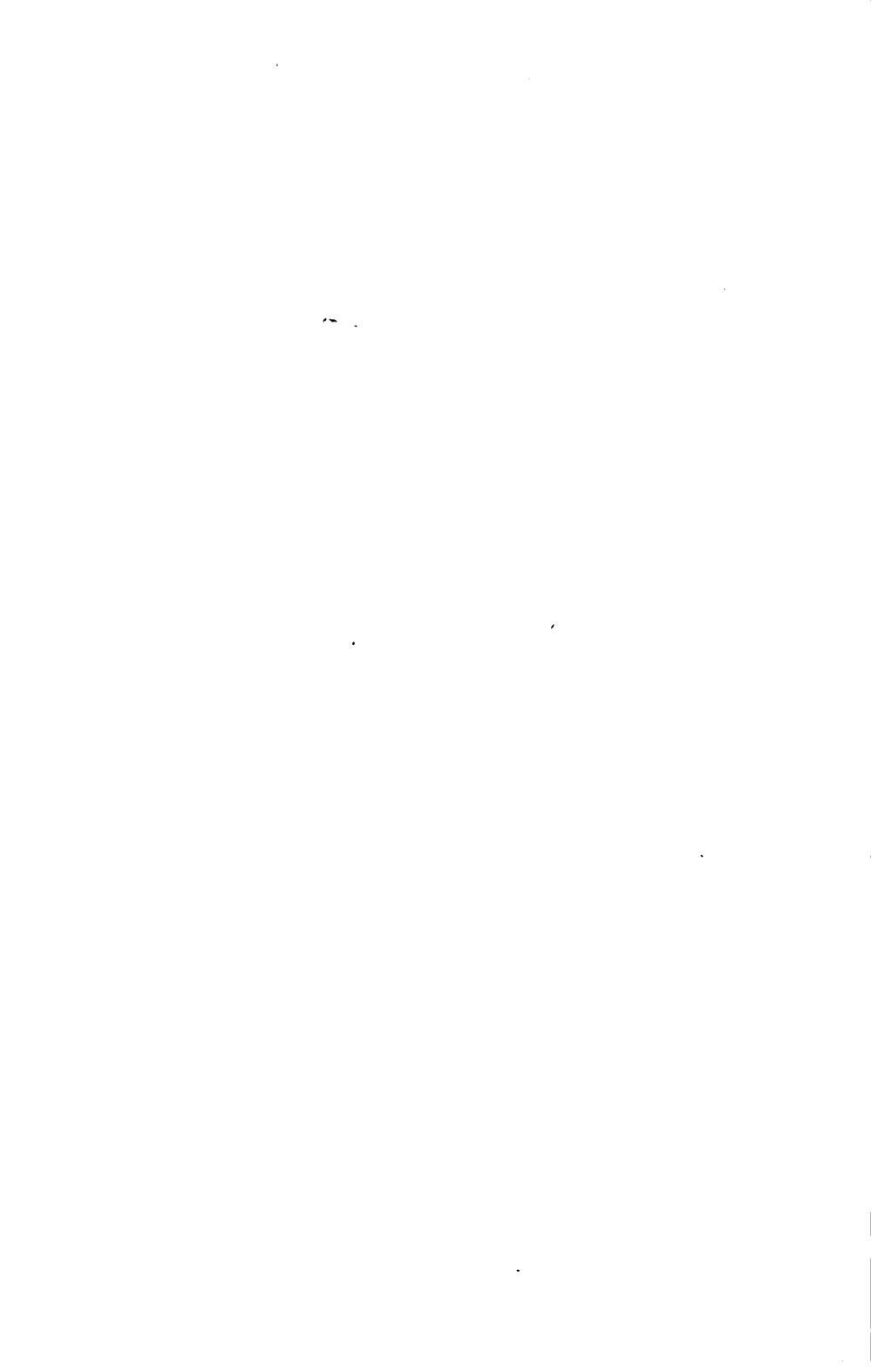
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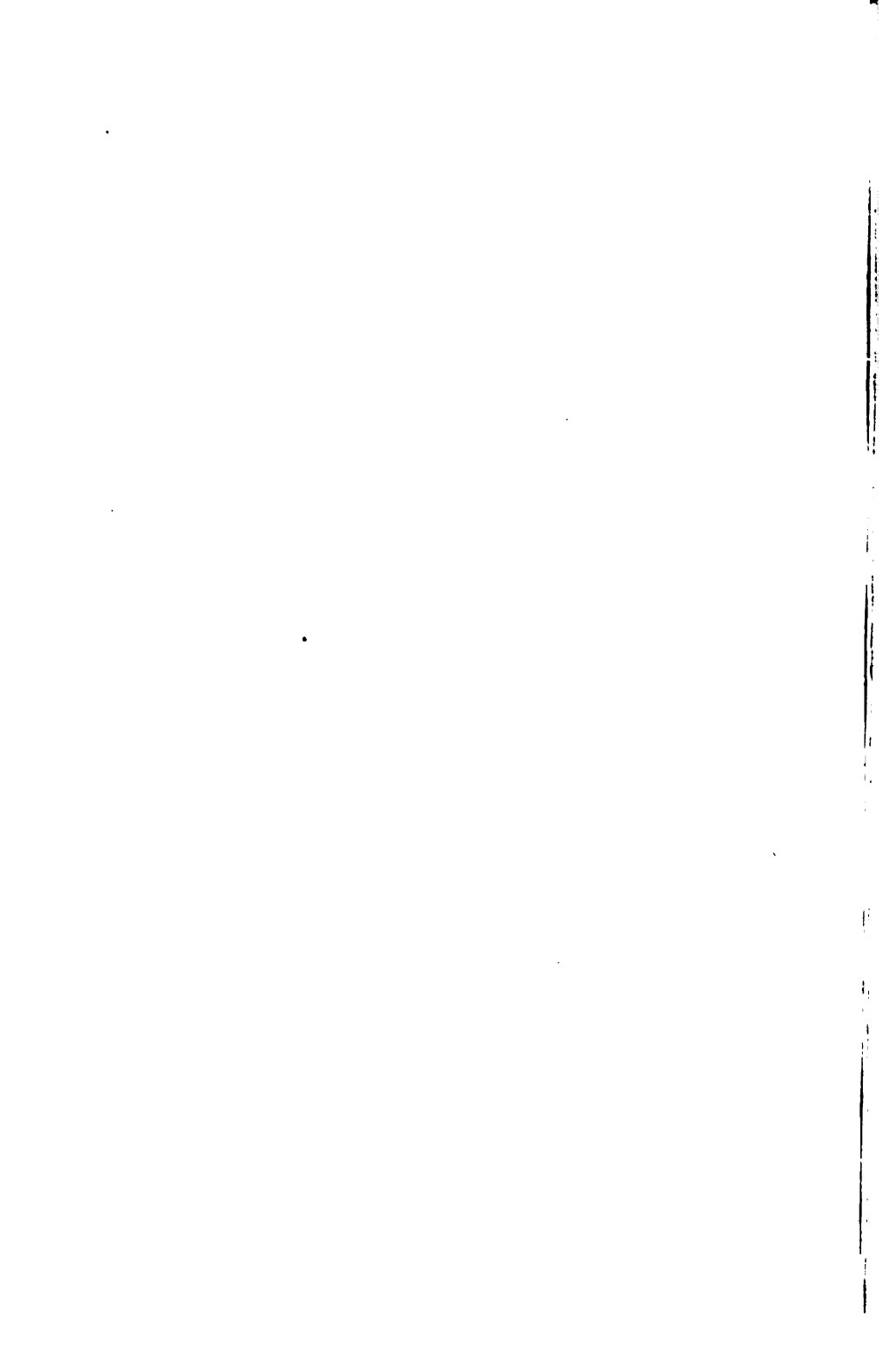
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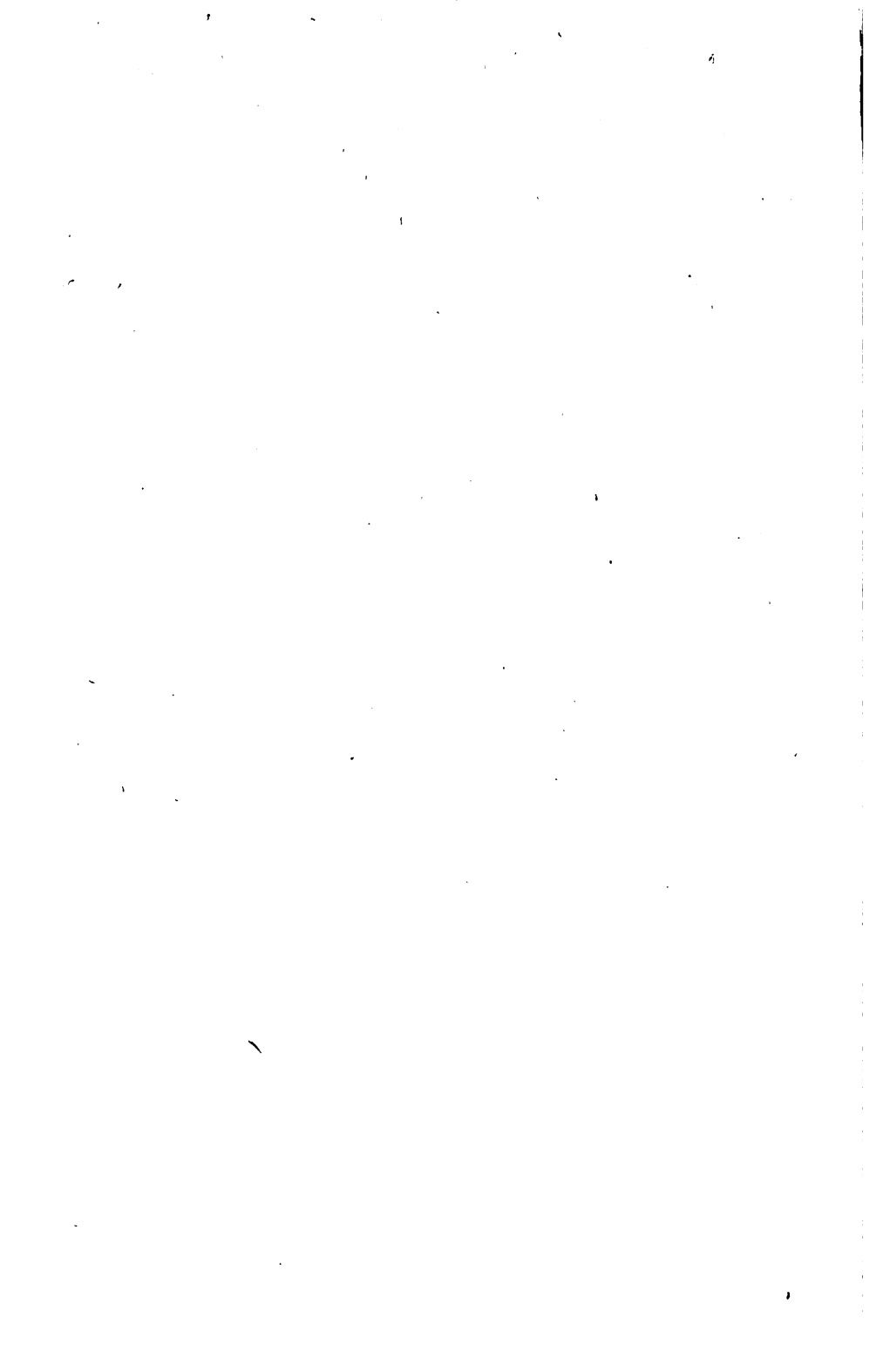
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